

Martin Albers

The Mirror of
Mnemosyne

(Et in Arcadia ego)

THE MIRROR OF MNEMOSYNE

1ST EDITION

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Although based on various classical sources and some philosophical curiosa, this work is entirely fictional, attempting to depict an alternative course of history. The scrolls of Democritus and Montanus are fictional.

The incentive to this work was provided by the poem "*The Mirror of Mnemosyne*" by Karl Shuker.

The work also honours the Centenary of the birth of David Bohm, whose scientific legacy remains to give heated discussions over the 'interpretation' of quantum mechanics.

Illustrations by the author. The images of fractals were generated with the program **Xaos** version 3.4.

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For

Johan Plomp



Verba volant, scripta manent

(*The pen is mightier than the sword... and considerably easier to write with.*)

THE MIRROR OF MNEMOSYNE

Dark, still, enshadowed, the mirror of Mnemosyne,
Moonlight encircling its chill, quicksilvered face.
Standing beside it, the masked goddess of Memory,
Ageless, all-seeing, transcending time and space.

Dare for a moment to gaze into her looking-glass,
See what you may in its crystalline mirage,
Brimming with happiness, hope, despair, and tragedy,
Each mood reflected upon its pale visage.

Do not anticipate viewing your own imagery,
Nor will your past be recaptured and displayed.
All you will see is the sum of your remembrances,
Rose-tinged distortions, each summoned and replayed.

These are your yesterdays, edited and modified,
Transformed by memory, shaped and cast anew.
Now just as real as the past itself had ever been,
Dreams become history, tangible and true.

So, as you linger, your captive eyes still mesmerised,
Drawn through the depths of the mirror's sable pool,
Who can be sure that the past is not a fantasy,
Mocking our minds like the laughter of a fool?

Karl Shuker

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Preludium

Even the relatively distant past seems near. It is hazy but still present in a mysterious way. Like a dark cloud it hovers over our present doings and goings. I would never have been aware of the importance of this fact if I had not been acquainted with a man called Pierce Farnell. He was the best friend of my grandfather, Michael Willmore, and he lived together with his wife Gillian on a sizable mansion called *Manor's Green* situated in a small forest north of Worcester. The residents were known in the district as '*a bit on themselves*' but to me and my wife Sally they had always been kind and considerate. The host, Pierce, was generous and talented. He frequently mentioned his old-aunts Julia and Guinevere (or 'Ginny') who had wanted him to become an actor. Indeed, his memory for poetry was admirable and he could recite long verses entirely by heart. He also played the piano meritoriously. His wife Gillian is still well known today for her translations of modern Russian literature. That our family must have had a special place in their hearts was revealed when my father and mother, without prior notice, inherited their estate 40 years ago. It then passed on to us 28 years later when my mother Claire died, two years after my father Jeremy. Soon after, we came across this odd collection of papers stowed away on the attic disclosing certain delicate affairs of our family. There were personal writings, books, journals and historical documents reaching back as far as the time of Democritus, and this material was so bizarre - at least from the perspective of our present time - that the task of straightening it out would have been a hopeless task. However, soon after we found on the same attic an unfinished trilogy. It was evidently written by our gifted supporters in an attempt to transform the motley collection into something more comprehensible. As two volumes had already been completed and the third part had been sketched in fair detail, the task of finishing the picture was in the end quite doable, and it also resolved some long-standing enigmas around my grandfather Michael Willmore and his circle of acquaintances.

To tell a story of an era that is now firmly in the past, with all the *dramatis personae* gone, is challenging. The period is today known as the *Century of Wars*, and the dubious vehicle of a novel, with fictional parts to fill up the missing facts, seems to be the only mode that fits, especially so because the earlier volumes were written in this queer mixture of the mysterious, the romantic and the prosaic. Our forebears were taken up in the great conflicts of their time in an entirely unpremeditated way. That we escaped by a narrow margin from complete disaster is now commonly acknowledged, but at the start of the 21st century some serious international incidents boosted the earlier rivalry between nations into an unwholesome all-pervading paranoia. It was truly a period of anti-enlightenment, comprising a long chain of events that had started all the way back in 1914 with the assassination of Franz Ferdinand and ending in 2014 with an incident called *Damascus-Gate*. Within two years, a worldwide wave of protest matured and was finally unstoppable. Luckily, humanity pierced through the psychological smoke screen and today the world's nations are much more homogeneous in outlook, and free from psychological mass manipulation and totalitarian doctrines. International law and freedom of speech have been re-established. That my forebears had a rather substantial role in this transformation was an unsettling discovery. Maybe they understood the intricacies of this period through their versatile interests, their openness in human relations and their intuitive way of solving problems. One of the most puzzling documents we found was the thesis of my great-grandfather John Armstrong, included here in unabridged form. Although he was a mere farmer, he was no ordinary one: he had a university education and he philosophized on the mysteries of existence in a rather elegant, persuasive fashion. He saw the excessive rivalry of the *Century of Wars* as embedded in the very nature of all living things, the *Strife of Mind over Matter*.

So, I hope to do tribute to my gifted benefactors by completing the trilogy they could not complete in their final years.

John Willmore, Shrawley 2082

Part I ~ Summer



1. Helios

The sun shines for free, unfortunately not every month.

Archibald MacLachlan

 N Saturday the 12th of June of the year 2021 Pierce Farnell and Michael Willmore delighted in an early breakfast on the terrace of Manor's Green, as the hot, pressing weather of the previous evening, with plenty of white wine, and the shimmering night had brought but little sleep. Earlier than was his habit, Pierce had started frying a decent omelette at seven in the morning and Michael had promptly risen at the sound of the frying pan clanging on the gas stove. Enticed by the scent of eggs with ham, cheese and mushrooms he expedited his morning routines and even skipped his shave. Both men had been together after a long break, and enjoyed each other's company mainly reading, listening to music and engaging in ardent discussions under the sunshade in the garden.

Pierce had finished making tea and served his menu with a veiled pride, although in these times of continued sparsity of imported goods they had to eke out occasionally on the eggs Michael had brought from the Muirkirk farm. Coffee was already for many years too costly in England proper, and they had got used to drinking tea, which was still decently priced. At Manor's Green Pierce always served it in the old teapot of aunt Ginny, which was decorated with two peacocks. Befittingly, two live peacocks were stately pacing on the large green around the house. According to his habit, Pierce had put up some morning music, this time one of the old vinyl records Michael had brought with him: the *Swanwhite Suite* of Sibelius, the first part of which was called '*the Peacock*'.

"Hmm... I say, Pierce, a triple dose of peacocks this early in the morning. Aren't you a bit overdoing?" Michael hummed when pouring his tea.

"A small tribute to Sibelius is not out of place now, I think. Aunt Ginny was always highly appreciative of his salon pieces, and Aunt Julia

used to play them quite often..."

"It indeed seems that Sibelius' music fares well in many a home in England nowadays, but to call them *salon pieces* doesn't do them justice at all. They *do* have their own character and distinction."

Pierce had just fetched the morning post, and before he could further comment, Michael inquired: "Is that a whiff of tarragon I discern here?"

"Correct," Pierce nodded.

"That's very nice! You should have become a cook, Pierce!"

"Thanks, but I remember it from the good old *Prancing Pony*."

"Really? Wasn't my invention, for sure."

"It was Richard's, don't you remember?" Pierce said.

"Ah, yes, I remember poor old Richard, what would have become of him? Would he still live in Glasgow?" Michael pondered.

"I guess so," said Pierce. "All but poor, I believe! He was mentioned in yesterday's newspaper..." Pierce, while eating, was browsing through his new mail and couldn't finish the sentence he was framing about Richard. "Speaking of Glasgow," he mumbled and lifted a letter of official weightiness from the pile: it was addressed to him personally. He impatiently opened the envelope and read the document with an increasing gaze of bemusement.

"Well?" Michael urged.

"From the University of Glasgow, Faculty of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences, Arthropod Research Department," Pierce read.

"Well, that's a mouthful," said Michael.

Pierce read on and then he beamed: "It seems I've discovered a new variety of cicada!"

"A *cicada*!?" Michael exclaimed.

"Yes, it was chirping in my garden at the top of its voice, and after a few sleepless nights it triggered my curiosity. After a long search I finally spotted the noisy intruder and I immediately knew it must be something rare. Imagine: a cricket-like insect, three inches long, half an inch broad, with a blue-green body, huge translucent wings, making a

sound almost like a bird. I was able to catch it in a jar and brought it immediately to Jim Holloway. He had never seen such a specimen before, and he said he would send it on to a University for investigation.”

“Oh, and when was that?”

“Roughly a month ago.”

“And who is Jim Holloway, if I may ask?”

“Our local cryptozoologist,” said Pierce, distractedly reading his letter. Michael frowned and ate on. He didn’t precisely recall what a cryptozoologist was, and decided to look it up later.

Now Pierce raised his brows in increasing bewilderment. “Of the order *Hemiptera*, suborder *Auchenorrhyncha*, infraorder *Cicadomorpha*, superfamily *Cicadoidea*, family *Cicadidae*,” here he took a little breath, “subfamily *Tibiceninae*, tribe *Zammarini*, genus *Zammara*, species reminiscent of *Zammara smaragdina*. Not earlier found in the UK... We propose to call it *Zammara Farnellii*.”

“Well, I say! It seems you’ve finally passed into the annals of Natural Science, Pierce! Congratulations!” Michael scoffed.

“Oh, you think that’s funny, do you?”

“Well, how does it feel then?”

“I don’t really know what to say,” Pierce mumbled. “Maybe I should call the University and ask whether they are quite sure.”

“No, no, Pierce. That should be fine. What else does the letter say?” Michael pried.

“That the *Zammara* strain was commonly found in the tropical forests in Central America, particularly Costa Rica.”

“Well, there we have it again,” said Michael. “Yet another tropical species emerging at our latitude.”

“Oh? You’ve heard about other cases?”

“Yes, when Monica visited us in Muirkirk last month she told us about a giant mouse they encountered at the Penderleath Camping in Cornwall. It was a species earlier found exclusively in Africa. She stayed there with her new boyfriend, and they were at night badly surprised by

the rodent gnawing at their tent posts.”

“Ah! I think I must correct you here, Mike. I think it was the brush-tailed rat from Peru. It was named after the zoologist Barbara Brown.” Michael gave Pierce a menacing look, but Pierce kept staring at the letter. “*Zammara Farnellii*... Hm... maybe I should think it’s a special honour.”

“Of course it is! I should keep my eyes open myself. Maybe I might find something interesting too.”

“How is Monica doing at University nowadays?” asked Pierce.

“Fine. She has always interesting things to report from the distant past, especially about trilobites. Fascinating creatures those! She had done her Master’s thesis on them a year ago and now she is getting ready for her PhD.”

“Trilobites, yes, I remember. Jim said that in trilobites God was experimenting with eyes.”

“Oh, he is a religious guy that... that...”

“Cryptozoologist, no not really, he is an agnostic, he said.”

“Right... Monica said also something along the same line... about the trilobites I mean.”

Pierce started to clean the table, and Michael nodded with appreciation. “Thank you, Pierce. That was a tasty start of the day!”

Pierce nodded back and disappeared inside. When he returned he took up the book he had nearly finished reading the previous day. Also one of the many old items Michael had taken down from Scotland, after an exhaustive cleaning of the attic.

Pierce commented: “Hermann Hesse was quite a visionary, as you said, but I wonder if even he could have guessed the height the *Age of the Feuilleton* would reach in the beginning of the new millennium.”

“You mean depths,” Michael responded.

“Both heights and depths! He even refers to something that might resemble our earlier passion for Powerpoint presentations!”

“Really?”

“Listen to this: ‘*for there was a good deal of lecturing ... both specialists and*

intellectual privateers supplied the middle class (who were still deeply attached to the notion of culture, although it had long since been robbed of its former meaning) with large numbers of lectures... people heard lectures on writers whose works they had never read and never meant to, sometimes accompanied by pictures on a screen.”

“Ah, I believe already Herbert Marcuse had warned about that.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, once I had this brief discussion with George Steiner, whom I met by chance in a train in the early eighties. He caught me reading that novel and explained that after the 2nd World War the middle class had gradually become hopelessly ignorant. Can’t now exactly recall the gist of the conversation, but his main line of thought was that a new form of illiteracy was spreading among the populace as the result of modern technology and capitalism, which pushed modern man into becoming some sort of extension of the artefacts he produces. It is detailed in Marcuse’s book *One-Dimensional Man*. I should still have that book somewhere.”

“Hmm, sounds rather elitist... what are you driving at, Michael?”

“Well, basically that in our hectic lives we often lack the time or patience to get acquainted with the more intricate facts of life, so we rely on pundits with loud voices and abstracts of books, supplemented by newspapers, magazines and movies, and if that’s not enough, we have lately turned to YouTube, the dumping place of all free thought.”

“Hmm, I suppose it all started with the Reader’s Digest, but surely, you will have to admit that nowadays only few people read a printed four-volume biography on Edward Elgar!” Pierce frolicked.

“Hah, hah, hah! How funny, Pierce!”

“Of course! People should make time to digest things more profoundly and get rid of all these shortcuts. I won’t disagree on that point. One should get rid of all these troublesome distractions.”

“So, that’s why you still keep up an old-fashioned line phone at exorbitant costs, have never had a TV and haven’t used a PC or mobile phone for years.”

“Well... I have adapted myself, and now I stick to my ways.

Besides, you and Sheila never had a TV either. Was a bit surprised you have one *now!*"

"True, we are now getting a bit interested to look at some of these old British television series."

"You mean, the *Onedin Line* and such?"

"Among others, yes, like what we saw during our last holiday in Finland, these BBC series of the 70's and 80's are most appealing," said Michael.

"Well, we've got lots of free time the last couple of years and lots of money to spend. I with my good old sickness pension from Dow and you, first with the Libyan compensation money and then the sale of the *Prancing Pony*."

"Well, most of the blood money initially went to Maria, but we had our first lucky break when Sheila sold the fitness centre in Bristol long before the sale of our inn. Of course we had also invested in it a lot. But indeed! I could go on early retirement and you could be the free artist."

"Freelancer, Michael, anything but a free artist!"

There was a brief silence, both men reading for a while, but Pierce remained edgy. "Really unfortunate that there is not yet any sight of this numinous *Glass Bead Game*," he said.

"The new American Castalia, the Princeton Institute of Advanced Studies, may well have the reputation for it," Michael mumbled from behind his newspaper.

Pierce read on for a while, but then he rose and started cleaning up in the kitchen. He was getting again a bit fed up with Michael's enduring cynicism. It was good then, but now it was somewhat out of tune with the general sentiment. When the population was amending civil society and politics in a new form of post-modern enlightenment, promoted by speaker MacLachlan very successfully in Scotland, the only thing Michael could do was nagging about the residual conflicts in the Middle East, the expensive petrol and sparsity of coffee, meat and fresh fish. All well and true, but compared to the years of the global

financial meltdown they were trifles, and now everything was heading towards the sun again. There was now even a prospect for enduring peace in the Middle East after a new settlement with Iran. Even that didn't seem to alleviate Michael's scepticism.

He walked back onto the terrace, where Michael was still concealing himself behind the newspaper. "Speaking about movies, which movie did we see last?" he asked.

"Return to Brideshead," said Michael, referring to the TV series they had been watching in a Finnish summer cottage the previous summer.

"Ah, yes, but I actually meant properly in the cinema," Pierce rectified.

"I really can't remember; that's a long time ago. Is there something interesting to see?"

"No, I just wonder... Was it not the third part of the Ring Trilogy by Peter Jackson?"

"No, it was the movie 2012. First time I left the cinema half deaf. After that I had no appetite for the cinema," said Michael.

"Ah, yes! Now I remember. Typical stuff of that time with all the doomsday hysteria," said Pierce.

Browsing further back in Hermann Hesse's book he tried to drive the earlier issue home. He soon found the underlined passage he was looking for. "Take this, for instance: *'In that Feuilleton world they had constructed of paper, people postulated the total capitulation of Mind, the bankruptcy of ideas, and pretended to be looking on with cynical calm or bacchantic rapture as not only art, culture, morality, and honesty, but also Europe and "The World" proceeded to its doom... The fact was that a breakdown of outmoded forms, and a degree of reshuffling both of the world and its morality by means of politics and war, had to take place before the culture itself became capable of real self-analysis and a new organization.'*"

"Fitting phrases from our present perspective, no doubt," Michael nodded approvingly. "What I liked best in that book were the *Three Lives*."

"Sure, nearly finished reading them, but don't you think that at the

time Richard MacGregor was quite correct in his assessments?"

"You mean in that posh restaurant in Glasgow, where he lectured the whole evening on Alchemy and the Revelation of John?"

"Yes, just before the US economic crash."

"Well, in the aftermath of 9/11 with the global wiretapping and assassination programs, the dissociation of the EU and then *that* on top hardly anybody believed it could get any worse," Michael stressed.

"I dunno. It could have gone much worse if these rich neo-conservative industrialists would have remained in power," Pierce rebutted. "Anyway, now things are developing again in a very positive direction, both financially and culturally. In the end things didn't turn out so bad as some had prophesized."

"Of course, also decline has to stop at *some* point, Pierce. Maybe it seems that the eternal *Wheel of Fortune* has been arrested, but I tell you, it is only somewhat slowed down... Soon it will take up momentum and it will plunge down again," Michael mumbled softly from behind his newspaper.

"This novel clearly mocks the genre of biographies, which were so abundant in the latter half of the 20th century," said Pierce.

"True, but there are a few formidable exceptions, such as these volumes on Elgar," Michael commented, referring to the literature he had been reading the previous days.

Pierce read on for a while and then remarked: "I see this pocket book must have appealed strongly to your father-in-law: it nearly falls apart and there are many scribbles and exclamation marks!"

"John was a bit overenthusiastic when I recommended it to him," Michael groaned. "He quoted it in his diary, referring to the tendency of mythmaking, which was so widespread at the time, inevitably followed by fear-mongering and staging the next wars."

"Well, luckily we have now left all this fear- and war-mongering behind, as Hesse uncannily predicted here. Historical revisionism has blossomed, so, no grounds for gloominess."

"Am I really so gloomy, Pierce?"

“Maybe your scepticism was needed at the time, but *today*?!”

“What do you mean?”

“Much has been written recently about the inclination of us, senior citizens, towards existential aloofness and pig-headed conservatism. OK, we were shaken out of our complacency for a while, and learned that filled supermarkets and cheap mortgages are not self-evident. However, eventually a transformation has really taken place. A new renaissance has entered the scene, especially in your precious Scotland.”

Michael rebuked in a faint, low voice, almost inaudibly: “Ah well... It is indeed something more promising for the younger generation, this so-called ‘revisionism’. Putting some billionaires in gaol and nationalizing a few international banks was not really so effective. I’ve seen the end of it already,” and then he made an attempt to continue reading the newspaper.

“Have you really?” Pierce yelled. “I think you’re as blind as a pigeon in the sunshine.”

“You’re not getting moody again, aren’t you?” Michael muttered.

“Things didn’t quite materialise the way the doomsday-preppers had prophesized. After our belly-landing the citizens took up the challenge with renewed fervour.”

“Whom are you talking about, Pierce? OK, in Scotland things are fine now, but here in England things are still quite austere.”

“I think we’ll get out of it, despite the pig-headed Tories, and the equally stubborn Labour Party. They are working hard in the EU to convince the English to return to the club,” said Pierce.

“Well, I certainly hope that will succeed, so that we can rid of these ridiculous borders in the middle of the British and Irish islands, but when you speak of a new enlightenment you stretch it a bit too far... to my opinion.”

“Maybe, and that’s why reading this book gives such an interesting time perspective. Take for instance, the renewed craze for building organs in the old style.”

“Not really a *new* craze, I would say. It has always been around.”

“No, but it is interesting anyway, particularly to us. Here John firmly underscored a passage where Hesse writes about the *League of Yourneyers to the East...*” Pierce started browsing again in the book. “Here it is: *In the League’s concert hall between Bremgarten and Morbio, one member built a Bach organ as perfectly as Johann Sebastian Bach would have had it built had he had the means and opportunity. Obeying a principle even then current in the League, the organ builder concealed his name, calling himself Silbermann after his eighteenth-century predecessor,*” he read. “I find it quite striking that among some organ builders Silbermann has regained popularity. You must remember the organ in the cathedral in Dordrecht in Holland, but even in Finland a small local organ builder built *three* Silbermann-inspired organs and even one in Saint Petersburg.”

“So, do you imply John got the idea from Hermann Hesse to have this organ built in Sao Martinho?”

“Maybe, yes.”

“But that organ is in Cavaillé-Coll style,” said Michael, “More the Romantic epoch... that is a small difference.”

“Well, Hesse refers clearly to the Baroque, particularly Silbermann.”

“Sure, and Cavaillé-Coll was also a notable organ builder,” Michael defended. “His concept is still much used in modern organs and John actually adhered more to the French organ repertoire.”

“The organ in Sao Martinho that your father-in-law helped designing and funding is a bit of a monstrosity,” Pierce commented.

“Oversized for that church, yes. Even Maria admitted as much,” Michael nodded. “Still, at the first hearing it made quite an impression on me. I even passed out!”

“Oh? How come?”

“It was the little revelation in the façade on that occasion, not the sound. However, we should definitively go and listen to the organ of St. Aloysius chapel. That’s a *topper!*” Michael enthused.

“What kind of organ is that?” asked Pierce.

“Also in Cavaillé-Coll style. I believe it was made by the same builder of the organ in Mänttä... you know? The one you briefly played

on during our holiday.”

“Yes, yes,” said Pierce, “but what about St. Aloysius?”

“Well, it’s already some years ago really, but that instrument was originally made for Duke’s Hall in London, and then the Royal Academy of Music got money from Elton John to get a bigger organ. So the original instrument was bought back by the Dutch organ builder who had built it and from there it found its way to St. Aloysius in Glasgow. I don’t know if the new organ in Duke’s Hall is any good, but the St. Aloysius College organ has become quite famous. It yet again proves my thesis that second-hand can be better than new.”

“Hmm. When was that organ placed in Glasgow?” Pierce asked.

“I read about the purchase some five years ago, and Sheila regarded it a good sign of progress of Scottish cultural life.”

“I won’t dispute on that point, Mike, but I’m afraid that if you don’t get out of that cynical attitude and all this complaining, I will have the greatest difficulty in putting up with you. This holyday in Finland was really the end, you know.”

“Sorry, Pierce! I *do* apologize again for Finland, but surely our friendship is not in jeopardy? Are you serious?”

“Michael, your cynicism is like the alcohol that drove Charles and Sebastian apart. I wouldn’t like to revisit *Brideshead* to find only the nanny left there, as a remnant of happier times.”

Michael didn’t know how to respond. Pierce’s statement sounded to him exaggerated and wholly inapt. “What do you mean, Pierce? It seems you didn’t enjoy the series we watched in the summer cottage.”

“No, I was all the time thinking how things will go with us. I was in despair and then this whole story only aggravated it.”

“Ah, I see! In that way! Well, I’m truly sorry. I can’t say much more.”

“At least stop with all this complaining about political and economic affairs. In that respect you are much better off in Scotland anyway. Here in England we have more legitimate reasons to complain.”

“Ok. I’ll do my best,” Michael said, “Let’s try to get it behind us.”

Pierce had put the novel aside and started to re-read yesterday’s

newspaper. “Maybe you should get in contact with Richard again. He is mentioned here. He seems to be Archie MacLachlan’s science advisor. Now he has won the Bairden prize. It is related to Ebola, his former study subject,” he said, handing over the newspaper to Michael.

“Is that so?” said Michael, taking over the newspaper from Pierce with particular interest. There Richard was, in a picture together with the famous Scotsman. Archibald MacLachlan had been a stand-up comedian known for his loopy sentences, then had become an advocate at the Scottish National Court, before rising to the formidable position of First Speaker of the New Scottish House of Commons in Edinburgh. In a short time he had turned out to be a leader unrivalled in diplomacy, pushing through highly unconventional tax reforms, renewing the electoral system, and establishing the Scottish Revisionist Movement. It had spread world-wide in various forms. He virtually ended politics in his early days in the new House of Commons with the summons: *In England, the Speaker of the House was not allowed to speak. In Scotland we will change that: the Speaker will speak so forcibly that both government and opposition will have to make a serious effort to get their feeble arguments brought into consideration of the House!!* In the course he had made himself strong particularly in tearing down the great barriers between employers and employees by transforming many Scottish firms into worker coops or, at least in the beginning, places where the majority of employees owned stock in their own enterprise. This had later revolutionised stock trading in Scotland and the population as a whole was slowly getting richer. In the meantime, the electoral system had become ‘*policy-oriented*’ instead of ‘*people-centred*’, and the new, re-evolving EU was adopting his ideas in one country after another, prospects steadily growing. Now it turned out that Richard MacGregor, the former biotechnology scientist who had spent ten years in prison and had been helped on his feet again by Michael and Sheila six years ago, had been MacLachlan’s science advisor already for two years. And now, he had won the esteemed Bairden Prize of Medicine.

“Well, I say! Entirely missed that one yesterday,” said Michael.

2. Mercurius

When a well-packaged web of lies has been sold gradually to the masses over generations, the truth will seem utterly preposterous and its speaker a raving lunatic.

Dresden James

AT the same instant, Gillian and Sheila enjoyed a more lavish breakfast at the Muirkirk farm: bacon and eggs with toast, some tomatoes and cheddar, and... coffee. Sheila had taken the initiative to invite Gillian to come and stay and give Michael the opportunity to make amends with his old comrade without the common interruptions of married life. Their friendship had suffered a bit, mainly due to Michael, who was still morose and naturally took it out on his best friend. There had been a good deal of rain in Ayrshire, but the gale of the night had luckily subsided, and now it was warm enough to sit outside. Presently, Gillian and Sheila had not much subjects left to discuss, and commented briefly on the weather.

“This summer is yet again quite different,” said Sheila. “I remember the whole of July last year was without wind, and we were below a thick carpet of clouds just at the time when they were discussing the prospects for wind and solar energy in Scotland.”

“Yes, yes,” Gillian giggled, “and that was a painful defeat of the Green Party after Speaker MacLachlan’s whimsical remark, but they might be returning to the issue in the longer run, particularly with the wind energy.”

“Definitely!” said Sheila. “Did you see the newspaper of yesterday?”

“No, not yet... Is there something interesting to read there?”

“Yes, I think you should read this little article about Richard MacGregor and Speaker MacLachlan. Just a moment! I’ll fetch it from the kitchen.”

Sheila went to fetch the newspaper, and at the same time scooped the new post on her way. “Look,” she said, “it is our old acquaintance who came with us to Delphi.”

Gillian took the opened paper from Sheila, and started to read. “Ah, I recognise him! He entertained us in Glasgow in that posh restaurant in that unruly winter, many years ago. What’s this story about?”

“He’s won the Bairden Prize of Medicine. It will be handed over by President Kennedy. It seems he got working on his old subject again: Ebola virus pathophysiology.”

“Oh, don’t recall he was a scientist. In Glasgow he looked more like a clergyman. Was he not a former convict?”

“Well, we helped him back to some sort of decent life. Now I am pleased he has been able to realize an important cure for this terrible disease. Almost makes me gloat with pride.”

“How did you meet him? You didn’t explain much about that at the time.” asked Gillian.

“Well, that is a long story. Michael would be the better person to explain, but in short: Michael met Richard on Madeira at a biomaterials conference. At the time Dicky was working for a US government institute on a very questionable subject. It had something to do with unconventional weaponry. On Madeira Dicky became the unfortunate suspect of a homicide and suffered a judicial swap. All highly irregular, although I wouldn’t say quite undeserved.”

“Well, that sounds very puzzling to me, but I understood at the time that it had something to do with that puffy policeman in Funchal, whom you were all trying to recruit for an assignment in Phrygia. I decided to retreat from that adventure. I will read this article first,” said Gillian.

Sheila then found this stylish envelope amongst the commercials. It was addressed to Michael. It was very official-looking mail with the feel of a thick carton inside. Sheila decided to open the letter in Michael’s absence. “Good Lord! Talking about the devil!” she exclaimed.

Gillian looked up and asked “Which devil do you mean?”

“Both of them: Archie MacLachlan and Richard MacGregor. Look at this!” She handed the card to Gillian, and she read:

To the honourable **Mr. M. Willmore**,

apprehending the honour of your - and your spouse's - company at
Lachlan Castle
for a Grand Banquet on

Sunday, 11th of July 2021 at 7 o'clock pm

to share - together with other distinguished members - in the
accomplishments of

Richard MacGregor

to be awarded the

Bairden Prize for Medicine.

Archibald MacLachlan, Barrister.

Highland dress, white tie

As Gillian was reading, Sheila noticed a scribble on the back of the card. "What does it say on the other side?" she asked. Gillian flipped over the carton and read:

PS: At the same time we would like to return to you an object of extraordinary value, which Dr MacGregor would have returned earlier, if it was not for the incredible negligence of the undersigned.

“What’s *that* all about,” asked Gillian.

“I haven’t the faintest idea. I think I should call Mike, because we may have a little problem with the dress code, but before even starting to think of it all, I’ll finish my breakfast.”

In the southern division of the British Isle Pierce and Michael were getting ready for their daily country stroll, when the old-fashioned phone rang. Pierce answered and then shouted to Michael who was refreshing himself on the upper floor. “Mike! … It’s Sheila!”

“Can’t it wait?” a voice echoed from above.

“It’s an important matter, she said.”

Michael’s red brow, still with shaving cream on his lower face appeared above the balustrade. “Tell her I will call her back in a minute.”

“No way, she wants you… *Now!*”

“OK, put down the horn, I’ll be coming down in a second,” Michael muttered, returning instantly to the bathroom. In a wink of an eye he had wiped his face, jumped down the stairs and leaped at the phone stand. Pierce was standing near, but out of sight. His curiosity was aroused and he reluctantly embarked on something he rarely did: eavesdropping. He overheard the conversation only from Michael’s side.

“What do you say, dear? … MacLachlan … and MacGregor? Yes … Yes … What does it read? … Next month? … Should manage, sure … Great! … What?? … … … No … No … I think it is the mirror. Yes, a silver mirror … I lent it to Dicky … No, no, no, the one we found in the rubble … Dicky asked if he could lend it when he visited us … Yes … I don’t know why … Well, I couldn’t say really why … extraordinary value? … Well, maybe, yes. I faintly recognised it from the artefacts of the tomb, couldn’t be sure but … the tomb of Mnemosyne, of course … No, no, I don’t think so … Well, when we have it back we’ll find out for ourselves, won’t we? … Wha? … Really? … Kilts an’ all? … Blast! I must hire one then… Sure, Pierce and I are doing fine, just off

to the forest again ... Yes, I'll call you in the evening ... On my mobile phone, yes ... don't know, battery maybe empty ... Cheerio then ... greetings to Gillian."

Michael was just getting ready to hop upstairs again when he heard a faint voice behind him. "Where did you find that shaving cream? You said it was all finished at the department store."

"Whipped cream, Pierce, whipped cream from a pressure can, the best a man can get," Michael hummed.

Pierce beheld his friend's half shaven countenance with amazement. All he could utter was: "Well, I say!"

Michael ascended the stairs again to resume his morning routines. He re-applied his provisional shaving cream and got on with it, still bemused by his friend's stupefied gaze. Soon they were on their customary trail amongst the trees of the small forest close to the river Severn, north of Shrawley. The beech trees and oaks were in full ornament, and the ferns were standing quite high.

Michael said: "Maybe we'll find a strange insect today."

"Maybe a *Gynacantha Wilmorii*," said Pierce.

"A what?" said Michael.

"A dragonfly," said Pierce.

"How are you so well-versed in Latin names of insects nowadays?" Michael grumbled. "I find it a trifle annoying."

"I spent quite a lot of time browsing the insect catalogue on the internet with Jim, and there you can find nearly all known species. Aunt Ginny liked dragonflies, and the name *Gynacantha* resembled her name, like *Ginny Singing*. That's how I remembered."

"Oh, that's funny, really funny Pierce."

They walked further along their regular course through the forest, passing along a narrow stream that would soon end in a small lake. Whether it was a small lake or a large pond remained to be argued, but it was the place where they used to sit for a while, looking at the water lilies and the duckweed. They were almost there when Pierce whispered: "Tapio will show himself at ten o'clock on the lake, I'm

quite sure. Don't disturb him; he will turn you into a spruce or a birch."

"And you into a goblin, if you are not silent yourself," said Michael.

They moved silently through the high ferns, which were abundantly decorating the lake side they were now approaching.

"We should go to Finland again."

"We *are* in Finland, Michael, we *are*!"

"If you say so," said Michael and shrugged his shoulders.

"Ssh! There He is," said Pierce. "*There!*" He pointed in the direction of the middle of the lake.

"By Jove, you're right," Michael whispered.

In the middle of the body of water was a small gathering of foggy clouds, which undeniably formed the outlines of a human figure. Two outstretched hands, a torso carrying a small bundle and a head with a little helmet. Still, a moment later it had diffused.

"You see, you made it disappear," said Pierce.

"I didn't, *YOU* did," Michael rebuked.

"Well, He's gone now, but there He was, as clear as a statue."

"Amazing," said Michael, who was again stunned by the powers of suggestion that Pierce was able to wield sometimes.

They sat down at the water side on two tree trunks. After a long silence Pierce said: "I would really like to open the debate... about Delphi! You are still depressed by the events there, and I think you really should start to look upon the events with a new eye. In your words: you should get this behind you."

"If you are trying to soothe me, I much value your attempt, but it was hardly Saint Michael slaying the Dragon. More Michael the Imbecile unearthing the Eternal Serpent and letting his friends clean up the mess, especially our beloved Maria!"

"Don't confuse yourself with Saint George... You didn't do it on purpose, did you?"

"The whole chain of events still doesn't make any sense!"

"I believe in reason, but I cannot put my feelings and intuition aside either, and of course our common observations. You have to consider

them seriously and try to *make* sense of it. This is also the strength of the revisionism that MacLachlan pursues. Try to see things in a different light. Make all the pieces of the puzzle fit together.”

“His Scottish Revisionist Movement, you mean?” asked Michael.

“The SRM is only the local implementation of a nowadays global movement, which Archie MacLachlan has adapted quite successfully in Scotland, wouldn’t you agree?”

“Well, he has a way with words, I’ll give you that. He has an uncanny way of depoliticizing affairs, and revealing their true nature, but this started in America with Chomsky and Wolin, and these other left-wing neo-socialists, who were they now...”

“Wolff and Hedges,” said Pierce.

“Yes, in the beginning he heavily quoted those. Didn’t you read Sheldon Wolin’s book on inverted totalitarianism?”

“That’s already too long ago, but I remember you giving me that book, yes. Only read part of it.”

“As I mentioned earlier, this process of commodification of life was already forecasted by Herbert Marcuse, and many others before him, particularly Karl Marx.”

“Yes, but not to the extent that large corporations corrupt society and subvert democracy to the point of complete collapse! No, no, I mean specifically what MacLachlan pursues.”

“What are you getting at, Pierce. He has talked continuously about his *World Parliament*, which has hardly come off the ground. What do you mean?”

“He was very good in convincing the population that we were on the road to economic totalitarianism, back in 2014 or there about, and we may have escaped this Gordian knot when he advocated a new form of worker cooperative.”

“Not really *so* new, Pierce. It was at that time strongly advocated by then senator Sanders, who got the idea from the economist Richard Wolff, and *he* was a neo-Marxist.”

“But MacLachlan referred to the idealist socialism of Max Weber

and Robert Owen to resolve economic affairs by a cooperative effort, where the risks and profits are shared, the main point being that one has to realise that large risks cannot be carried by the shoulders of one person. Likewise, you cannot carry such a huge load of guilt all alone. That's what I want to say.”

“Oh... well... a bit of a long-winded way to get to the point, Pierce,” said Michael. He paused for a while looking down on the duckweed. “Sure... I have to confess I’m still pretty stuck. I just somehow, after all these years, still don’t get along very well with the person Michael Willmore. I feel responsible for Maria’s death and I keep feeling miserable.”

“You are not the only one who misses her. I think your feelings are misplaced. You shouldn’t drag everybody down with you, into the same dreary pit!”

“If you are trying to clarify the matter, the only thing I can say is that I live now already for many years with this huge inner conflict, this cognitive dissonance. All the events back then rebel against my sense of rationality. Metals cannot become alive and turn into dragons!”

“Well, it was quite a feat of chemistry you performed there. It at least deserves respect!”

“Thanks for the compliment, but it was a simple recipe I just followed. In the end it did a lot of harm.”

“On the surface it certainly looks like that, but - as we many times discussed earlier - there may be many phenomena that we don’t know, and the ultimate meaning of the world’s historical trajectory is obscure and will remain so. You cannot go on living in this condition,” Pierce stated solemnly. “We cannot know where we’re all heading and inevitably the end comes for us all in *some* form.”

“I agree. But the fact seems to be that, in *that* respect, Maria knew very well where she was going.”

“How do you mean?”

“She said something along the line that she was going to the opposite of Shambhala, and all for the sake of Heaven.”

Pierce frowned in disbelief: “Wha?”

“I have been carrying a secret, and I promised Maria to keep it, but I find it difficult if our friendship is at stake.”

“You don’t have to tell me anything confidential, but I would appreciate it if you just could stop being so morose,” Pierce pressed.

“My gloom is rooted in this secret. Imagine the rational soul that I am, reflecting on events concerning Heaven and Hell.”

“Well, then I must leave it to you... It’s your responsibility,” said Pierce, “but if it becomes too hard to carry, you’d better open up. We’ve seen what happens when governments, for instance, have too many secrets; in the end they drown in it.”

Michael’s thoughts, however, were drifting in another direction. “Maria was an exceptional person, wasn’t she,” he said. “I noticed that immediately when I met her during that conference on Madeira. I felt very strongly drawn to her.”

“And she to you, I can confirm that.”

“Loved her like a sister - the sister I never had. She brought all that was good in me to the surface. It was actually a little bit frightening, to be honest.”

“Same for me,” said Pierce.

“She was a headstrong person, a real artist... open and compassionate, and yet she carried a dark secret... felt guilty... a complex person.”

“Clearly so.”

“When exactly was it you visited her, Pierce?”

“Let’s see now... First in 2006... then in 2008, and again in 2011, and then when we all together had our last visit in 2016.”

“Also Sheila went to see her more than once, of course, but as we had the pub to attend to, I had to stay mostly behind.”

“Hah! Always recruiting *me* to help you out!” Pierce sneered.

“Yes, yes, much appreciated, but you always gladly volunteered. Maria and Sheila discussed women’s affairs mostly. I suppose you were spending most of the time with Maria behind the piano.”

“One day at best. In 2006 she was studying Schumann’s *Kreisleriana*, and in the process I got a bit of instruction myself, but of course this piece was far beyond my level. No, walking in these splendid forests, that was what we did the most. She coaxed me on very long walks along the Levadas. She said I should appreciate nature more. I crossed the whole island with her and saw the most amazing plants and trees.”

“Well, now with your new cicada you just struck the *jackpot!*” Michael teased.

“Come on now Mike, you don’t need to rub it in!”

“Sorry! I remember that already back in 2005 I made a day’s excursion with her, together with a former Dutch colleague straight after the biomaterials conference,” said Michael. “We were quite exhausted at the end of the day.”

“Poor Michael,” said Pierce, “and now you are carrying her dark secrets.”

“Well, we have to see what the future brings. Surely you should also admit that you have been seriously affected by Maria’s disappearance. You haven’t played a single note on your Bösendorfer since.”

“True, but I have now so many other interests. Climate change for one, something that Monica aroused on our first meeting. Then reading and gardening.”

Both men sat in silence for a while. Then Pierce asked in a subdued voice: “Do you think Maria is still alive somewhere?”

“I can’t really say, Pierce. The only thing we know is that she disappeared with all those antiquities. No trace of anything, and then the Americans came in to seal off the place.”

“The Earth had gobbled her up,” Pierce said. “Still, we should try to make the most of our remaining years, wouldn’t you say?”

Michael shrugged his shoulders. “I suppose so.”

“I quite like that passage at the end of the Glass Bead Game,” said Pierce. “How did it go now... *Our days are precious but we gladly see them going, if in their place we find a thing more precious growing: A rare, exotic plant our gardener’s heart delighting; A child whom we are teaching, a booklet we are*

writing. I really very much like the idea of writing a book or so, just as a little gesture to those who share my views and passions, however quirky.”

“You will have at least one enthusiastic reader, Pierce.”

“An easygoing, careful examination of things not only for my own pleasure, but also in a tone of a proper mean between the solemn and the intimate, earnestness and jest, a tone not of instruction, but rather of a sociable kind of communication, a discourse on various things I have learned,” Pierce quoted.

“By all means, Pierce, go ahead!” Michael said. “A propos, I may have underestimated the effect *The Glass Bead Game* had on my father-in-law at the time. I’m slowly getting convinced he left Muirkirk because of it.”

“Maybe it appealed to his sense of adventure, but that should not make you feel guilty again,” said Pierce.

Sitting on the tree trunks they were silent for a while, and a few large *Gynacantha* buzzed to and fro.

“You’ve got an invitation to MacLachlan’s castle, haven’t you?” Pierce asked after another silent moment.

Michael scowled at his friend and said: “You have been listening in, haven’t you?”

“Yes, Sheila must have been in good spirits. I couldn’t help myself this time.... and then you need *kilts*.”

“Indeed. Do you have a suggestion?”

“I can supply you with the Ferguson tartan.”

“Oh? Really?”

“From my distant uncle Max. Should be in fine condition, and it should fit you quite well.”

“Great! That will save us a lot of trouble. These national outfits have become an utter nuisance, and the prices have been absolutely skyrocketing.”

“Not a surprise!”

“Anyway... It seems we are also getting that mirror back, finally.”

“Do you mean that silver mirror we found in Delphi among the

rubble, the one you lent to Dicky?"

"Yes, but it seems he had lent it on to speaker MacLachlan."

"Oh? Why would he have done that?" asked Pierce.

"Beats me. We'll find out soon, I suppose."

"Hmm... there it was, just lying at the edge of the crater... the morning after. The only thing left of all the ancient treasures piled up there," Pierce recollected.

"Yes, that was definitively odd, that we and that stone altar were saved from the total annihilation of the whole restored site of Delphi and the most precious hoard ever collected on Earth!"

"Yeah, the super-rich surely put themselves at stake in Delphi," said Pierce.

After a long, meditative silence they decided to walk on. This time they took the path that led up the hill, where they stopped for a moment looking at the scenery.

"Maybe you should read the Glass Bead Game again. I think it can clarify matters to you," said Pierce.

"I suppose I could read it, yes. It has been a long time. Superb translation, I'll say that. Do you know I found it among the books of Andy Tielock on Madeira?"

Pierce shook his head. "No, how is that possible?"

"That's what I have been wondering about a long time. Anyway, I'd rather keep to my present readings about our local hero."

"Fair enough."

"So, what does this cryptozoologist, Jim Holloway, actually do for his daily bread?"

"He tries to find evidence of the existence of Cryptids."

"And what are they?"

"Unusual life forms," Pierce simplified.

"Would they include dragons and giant snakes?"

"Sure, he has quite a number of papers on those. Actually, I browsed through a few volumes a short while ago. Really didn't discuss the vicious creature we encountered in Syria, but..."

“Maybe you could do me a favour, Pierce. Try to lend some of those books from him.”

“We can go and pay him a visit. He lives only six miles away from here, near Lower Broadheath.”

“But that’s a very long walk!”

“We’ve done it before,” Pierce smiled.

“Well... yes... but that was more a planned pilgrimage!”

“We can take the motorboat along the river Severn. That’ll take us there in a few minutes.”

“Good idea. He wouldn’t mind?”

“No. If he is at home, he always has an open door, but most of the time he roams the continents giving lectures. He has recently found the remains of a huge Pteranodon.”

“Haven’t they found those earlier?”

“Sure, but his specimen was found well preserved in the Siberian soil, and could not have been older than 5000 years.”

“You mean that it died only *recently*?”

“Yes, but there was a storm of protest and disbelief in the zoologist and palaeontologist camps, and he’s now trying very hard to convince the scientific community of the validity of his findings.”

“Strange that Monica didn’t mention it,” said Michael.

“You don’t talk much about her study subjects, I suppose?”

“Well, she always accompanies Sheila on the piano nowadays. Hardly get a word in. We talked about the trilobites though.”

“Nice that Sheila has found a better musician.”

“She is also an amateur, Pierce, and has turned her back to music already years ago. It is more Sheila who always presses her to play and she’s not at all as fluent in sight-reading as you are. She hasn’t even collected her precious Bechstein after she moved in with her wealthy boyfriend.”

“Ah, I see,” Pierce moaned, with a painful frown on his brow. “Why would she have stopped, I wonder?”

“She said that it was due to the ongoing professionalization,

institutionalisation, commercialization and competitive drive that has pervaded the district of classical music and has spoiled the pleasure of music-making for her.”

“A not unfounded point of view, I must admit,” said Pierce. “Whole books have been written about that problem lately. Still, I don’t think that the time spirit should be allowed to discourage a person from doing the things he likes to do, whatever amateurish.”

“Of course, and, as you know, Sheila can be quite persuasive. But back to the main subject: would Jim Holloway know anything about mythological creatures? Pytho, Echidna, and such?”

“I asked him a month ago and he believes that some of the mythological creatures must have really existed even in recent history, particularly dragons.”

“And now he hit the jackpot with this Pteranodon, which is a bit like a dragon.”

“Hit the jackpot … hit the jackpot … You start to sound monotonous, Mike. There’s hardly any money in it, both for me and Jim.”

“Sorry, Pierce. Let’s go and see if he’s at home!”

They took the turn towards the river Severn, where a little rowing boat was lying ready. Pierce decided to take the light outboard motor from the boathouse, which was situated at the far end of the plot of land of Manor’s Green. Jim lived near Hallow close to the river, so the trip would be a bit easier than the exhausting journey they made by foot a few days ago to Lower Broadheath, the place where Edward Elgar was born on the 2nd of June 1857.

3. Venus

I honestly think the situation [of science funding] is better now than it was thirty years ago; I think people are more aware of the danger of compartmentalization, and I think that federal funding agencies such as the National Science Foundation and the MacArthur Foundation are more on the lookout for new interbreedings between established academic disciplines. I see these groups as facilitators; there's a better recognition that it's no good feeding all the financial support into the long-established disciplines because you'll end up getting stereotyped stuff again and you'll miss the winners.

Steven Toulmin (1993)

A month had passed in relative serenity, when the long awaited Sunday arrived on which the Willmore couple would attend the official proceedings at Lachlan Castle. Sheila and Michael had set off with a brand new Toyota *Mirai eRZ*, and passed through the hot and dry landscape towards the East coast, a 2½ hour drive. The first part of the route, via Mauchline, Kilmarnock, Irvine, and Paisley to Glasgow, they made as old wayfarers: this trip they had made 36 years earlier in the opposite direction, and the weather was as dry and hot as it was then.

“Well, this calls for a special celebration,” said Michael when they were at the outskirts of Irvine.

“What for?” Sheila asked from behind the steering wheel.

“Our acquaintance which started along this route... and my hydrogen engine project which ended 16 years ago.”

“Hmm. Maybe we can stop in Paisley or Kilbirnie.”

“You’ll have to skip the whiskey if you want to drive.”

“I might resist the temptation,” said Sheila.

“No, I can drive too. Of course, you shouldn’t arrive drunk at Lachlan Castle. You may leave Lachlan Castle in the bottle, but coming there in that condition will make a bad impression.”

“I have always been very modest with alcohol, as you know,” Sheila

protested.

“As on that first evening? When you extinguished me with that Islay whiskey and entranced me with your violin?”

“Well, with that I succeeded quite well, didn’t I?”

“Yes, you were utterly invincible,” Michael laughed, “especially in that plum dress!”

They drove already close to Kilbirnie, when Michael proposed: “Let’s see if in this erstwhile bankrupt parish we can find back that small pub... You know: where we had all those whiskeys on our first encounter.”

“Suits me, let’s go and have a look. We’ve got plenty of time,” Sheila enthused. “I think it was on Newton Street.”

The short detour appeared to be rewarding. Most of the residents were either in church or still sleeping, they surmised, and the small establishment, *Sean’s Pub*, at the corner of Newton Street was easily located; it appeared quite unaffected by the many years of turmoil that had beset the newly established Republic of Scotland. Sheila parked the car at the street side, silently, and then they stepped inside.

“Howdy!” somebody called, although nobody was yet in sight.

“One *Islay* whiskey and one *Pale Ale* please,” Michael hooted around. His voice echoed harshly in the empty premises.

A short, sturdy man appeared out of a side door behind the counter.

“Islay whiskey? At *this* time of day?” the man said, looking slightly bewildered.

“Yes, if you want to stay in business,” said Michael.

“We’ve been in business for more than 50 odd ‘ears. Mind’ye,” the man uttered with a slightly squinted glance.

“Don’t recognize you,” said Michael, “but we’ve been here a very long time ago, and it made a lasting impression. The Whitbread pale ale was quite good, I recall.”

“I can find you a Whitbread, sure, and what kind of whiskey the lady would like?”

“If you have an Ardbeg, I would like that,” said Sheila.

“If possible both from the year 1985,” said Michael.

“Oh... A bit difficult, that one...” the man said, scratching his thin white hair. “I’ll ‘ave to ask dad. He knows the cellar so much better than I do... just a moment.” The bartender then left through the door from which he had just emerged, and evidently ascended a steep stairs to the upper floor.

Sheila looked at Michael with an acerbic grin. “From *nineteen-eighty-five*... you daft monkey!”

A few minutes passed, and then the man re-materialised in the company of his father. “Who may I ‘ave the pleasure of entertaining?” the old proprietor asked in a low voice, slowly shovelling forward in the direction of his esteemed morning guests.

“Michael Willmore, good morning Sir. This is my wife, Sheila.”

“Hmmm... Hmmm...” the old man purred. His voice sounded like an old tomcat, but his outer complexion more resembled that of an old beaver, with his unshaven white face and a round belly beneath it. However, there was not really anything odious in his manners, his blue eyes twinkling with genuine interest.

“Not *THE* Michael Willmore of the *Prancing Pony* in Bristol, surely?”

“The one,” said Michael. “You’ve heard of me... and my inn? All the way up *here*? ”

“Well, maybe a coincidence, but I’ve visited that place a few times. Excellent pies! Excellent beers! Didn’t actually meet you in person at the time.”

“What’s your name then?” asked Michael.

“Sean Dougherty, pleased to meet you... at last!” he said, and stuck out his hand for a cordial shake. After these preliminaries he returned to the matter at hand. “There may be some leftovers from the earlier years for special guests... I’ll ‘ave to ‘ave a look. You said Whitbread Pale Ale, vintage 1985?”

“Yes, yes, or something near that year,” said Michael.

“Should be still some bottles left, I’ll ‘ave a peep in the owl’ corners of the cellar. And then I think I still ‘ave a bottle of Ardbeg out of 1985

for the lady here, a Cadenhead Dumpy, if I remember correctly,” the old mister Dougherty said with an impish twinkle in his eye.

“A wee dram will suffice,” said Sheila. “We still have to hit the road.”

“Aye!” the old man said, “but I can also have one... a wee dram... You know... Always good to have a good excuse. Hmm... Hmm... Come on Garth, we’ll ‘ave a look in the cellar.”

He was starting already on his way down, when he turned back to his guests after a short pause. “Maybe the guests would like to ‘ave a glimpse of our treasures too?”

“I don’t want to impose, really,” said Michael.

“Come on now Sire! As an old colleague, to all intents and purposes, I think you’ll find my cellar int’resting.”

“Well, you rouse at least *my* curiosity,” said Sheila.

“Watch those stairs, I say. They’re like the entrance to *Inferno*... You know Dante?” the proprietor asked.

“Sure, but in that case we’d better accompany you down. We wouldn’t like you to have a great fall on our account,” said Michael.

“That’s the spirit!” the old man said, “but if we get out and yet climb these stairs, we may yet be redeemed, if I recall correctly the way to *Purgatory* again leads upwards!”

After walking around a corner into a narrow corridor, a black, stony stairs downwards appeared, truly like the entrance to Dante’s famous place of demise.

“Indeed we’ll need a great purge ‘ere one day soon,” said the old proprietor. He switched on the lamps, and after they all had descended into the cellar Michael and Sheila observed an extensive space. The clammy temperature and tempered lights confirmed their inkling that this was the domicile of the rarest beverages in Scotland, clandestinely stowed away during 50 years of shady trade. Soon the old Sean had opened an iron fence behind which, as he confirmed, the vintage beers were held in secure storage. “Still ‘ave those Whitbread bottles with a real cork, you see, but they’ve likely gone bad. The 1985 has metal

crown corks but should be quite good still.” He lifted two bottles from the pile. “One for you Sire... and one for *ME!*”

After handing over the bottles to Michael, he closed the fence and shovelled slowly in the direction of a darker corner. “Whiskey... Hmmm... Whiskey...” he droned, and then went on humming a short tune not known to his guests. “Here it should be, the Lag’vulin, , Laphro’g, Ardbeg, yes... but also Balvenie, Speyburn and Tamnavulin.” Again he opened an iron fence behind which a variety of Scottish distilled treasures had been kept for many years, as a thick layer of dust confirmed.

“Maybe we can bring some bottles with us for Archie and Dicky,” said Michael.

Sheila looked at him with a questioning glance, but then understood what Michael implied.

“What about one bottle of Speyburn, one Lagavulin and the Ardbeg... for here and for the road,” Michael proposed.

“Suits me,” said Sheila.

“Ahaa, Ahaa... Hmmm...” old Sean purred. “Give me a ‘and, Garth.”

The old man slowly handed over one precious bottle to his son, and took two bottles himself. “It seems the purge ‘as started,” he laughed.

Slowly the fence was closed and they walked back to the stairs. Once in the pub, Sean proposed: “So first these Whitbread glasses, Garth, and then these smaller brandy bowls over there. Hmmm... Hmmm...”

Garth was looking a bit suspicious, because he just witnessed something wholly unprecedented: his father suddenly letting go of vintage beers and precious old whiskeys and having the intention to enjoy some of it himself. Not before long Michael and Sheila found each other at one side of a table with the owner and his son on the other side, Sheila tasting the precious Cadenhead Dumpy and the owner and Michael sharing the Whitbread Pale Ale, which was very pleasantly matured with a smooth palette of nut and caramel. Garth

also tasted the Ardbeg, but only a customary wee dram. Sean supplied a range of interesting tales about how he got all the precious bottles collected in his cellar, and how he had decided to sell the stuff to the increasing hoard of collectors, both in Scotland and abroad, all the time humming in between.

“I say, just the other day I ‘ad some inquiries coming from Edinburgh, asking if I was still against selling my collection. So, now I see the proper time ‘as arrived.”

“Please, don’t sell out on our account,” said Michael. “We might feel guilty.”

“Nonsense, young man! You know the business. It’s that the bad days are clearly behind us. For instance, this Cadenhead here, what d’you think it’s worth nowadays?”

“A few thousand Euros at least!” said Michael.

“*A few thousand?*” Sheila cried.

“In the right direction!” said Sean. “One Chinese collector last month made an eight thousand euro bid.”

“Terrible!” said Sheila. “I must have sipped up a fortune! How can we ever repay you?”

“The Whitbreads and the Dumpy are on the house, Ma’am, but for the unopened Speyburn and Lagavulin you will have to pay something. Quite a good year, I see, bottled in 1985 and 1986, both 25 years matured in sherry casks. Hmmm... Hmmm...”

“But what would these be worth?” asked Sheila.

“Certainly a few thousand euros too,” said Michael.

“But, that’s *insane!*” said Sheila, “and that in these times of scarcity.”

“Hypocrites! That’s what they are, these collectors!” Sean suddenly exclaimed. “They won’t even drink ‘um. Hmmm... Only want to keep ‘um longer, so that they will rise further in price, until they’re quite spoiled. These folks ‘ave no taste... literally.”

“I suppose we can make you an offer, Sean,” said Michael. “What about fifteen hundred euros? They are presents not for collectors, but for people who would actually appreciate them, if I’m guessing right.”

“Important people?” old Sean probed.

“Yes, important and cherished people, but I’m not going to tell you who they are!”

“Well.... uhm... five ‘undred euros then! Colleague’s favour!”

“No, no, one thousand euros! Take it!” said Michael.

“Eight ‘undred is fine for me at this occasion,” said Sean with a benevolent nod.

“Well, let’s stick to that then. I’ll finish the Whitbread and then we must be on our way.”

As soon as Michael had paid for the two precious bottles of whiskey, and was at the point of leaving with Sheila, Sean shouted from the table. “You’re forgetting the rest of the Dumpy, poor folks!”

“Are you sure?” said Sheila.

“An opened bottle is worth only the pleasure of drinking, and I ‘ave no stomach for it myself,” said Sean.

“Well, for the road then,” said Sheila. She took the bottle, and gave Sean a firm hug and a kiss on his cheek. “You’ve made our day,” she said.

“Mine too!” Sean beamed.

They had proceeded to Paisley where they had to fill the hydrogen tanks and then decided to have coffee on the town square. This was a well-known historical municipality with an earlier thriving textile industry, but new entrepreneurs had filled the former textile premises. Mainly in IT, but also in the life sciences new small businesses had slowly come to flourish. Quite a stretch from the renowned Paisley textile designs, which could still be seen in many places: the Persian fig-tree leaf pattern, likely of Zoroastrian origin.

“A bit like Tampere here,” said Michael. “There they also had a flourishing textile industry, founded by a Scotsman even, and a metal works in the centre of town. Now it is all cinemas, shops, offices and posh residential flats.”

“Hmm... Your ill-fated holiday with Pierce,” said Sheila.

“Only at the end,” said Michael. “The weather became so bad and

the rented summer cottage was very primitive, and much too far away from any habitation. That sauna really finished me!”

“It was not nice of you to take it out on Pierce like that. He went to such an awful lot of trouble to make you comfortable.”

“Sorry to say, but the timing was really bad. I feel still ashamed about this trip. He even called me a hypocrite. Can you imagine? Me! A hypocrite!”

“In the broad sense of the word we all are, Mike. Sitting here sipping our cappuccinos, while in the rest of the world there has been so much death and destruction.”

“Not literally by our hands, Sheila. Of course we should have protested more aggressively when we went into Afghanistan and Iraq, but in the end things straightened out quite well. The Syria case was quite the end.”

“I just wondered what would have happened if all these so-called *PIGS* countries would have remained in the EU, and the US had not been plunged first into a banking crisis and then in the liquidity crisis. Would things have gone for better or for worse?”

“Impossible to say, we have no view into parallel universes.”

“Pity that you cannot do experiments with history. Anyway, after Scotland re-joined the EU, things have turned out much for the better.”

“True, but in England proper things are still lagging behind significantly,” Michael sighed. He had finished his coffee. “At least we’ve done personally well enough. I feel a bit like Sibelius, who had such a supportive and sensible wife!”

“That’s a sweet compliment. Thank you!”

“And visiting his home, Ainola, was really one of the highlights of our holiday. Mind you, not all was so bad...”

“Luckily!”

“How is your brother doing nowadays?”

“Oh, it’s the same, can’t get much out of him; unemployed and grumpy.”

“Should we pay him a visit? Just say hello, now that we are here?”

“I don’t think we should. Last week Jim was quite evasive.”

“Oh, well, let’s go then. We shouldn’t risk coming late, should we?”

Eventually, they arrived at Loch Fyne an hour early. Sheila decided to make a walk along the water front before knocking on the castle door. Loch Fyne had maintained its reputation for oyster and herring fisheries, and had been able to sustain the associated restaurants. As the foremost area for diving and fishing, there was now to be seen the reconstructed Castle Lachlan, as an addition to the highly popular castle of Inveraray. The warm weather coaxed Sheila and Michael for a walk, and they approached Lachlan Castle along the shore. The car was safely put in the nearby caravan park, where they had planned to spend the coming night, after the banquet. They walked along the narrow road, in the direction of a prestigious cottage restaurant and then proceeded to Lachlan Castle. Michael carried a bag with his kilts and Sheila’s evening dress, while Sheila carried in her rucksack the three cherished bottles of whiskey, of which one had already been sampled.

“Would there be a butler?” asked Michael.

“I don’t know,” said Sheila. “At least I hope they aren’t serving Haggis.”

“It is not Burns Day, but if they do I think we cannot decline it,” said Michael.

“Luckily much whiskey to poor it down with.”

“The Haggis you can always feed to the Collie, if they have one,” said Michael.

It was punctually at six ‘o clock when they knocked at the solid oak door. When it opened, a well-known face with bushy red hair appeared; the stout figure of Archibald MacLachlan.

“Ah, *THERE* you are! The other prized guests of the evening! Mister and Missus Willmore! Please!” He made a cordial bow, and saw them in almost as if they were royalty. “I suppose you want to dress for the evening, but maybe you’ll sit outside for a while to rest your legs.”

They stepped inside the spacious hall, which nearly took all the space of the restored building, and readily spotted Richard MacGregor

at the other end, cordially waving his hands. Right behind him there was an inviting terrace with a low sun.

"Thanks so much for your invitation!" said Michael. "We were very surprised indeed."

"That we got you here has an important reason. Dicky told me all about you. How you helped him and so. Please come and sit for a while so we can get better acquainted."

"I see you don't have a butler," said Sheila.

"Oh, poor me, no," said Archie. "Like to do things all by myself. Of course a banquet like this, that's another matter. The troops will be marching in soon, I suppose, so better get out of harm's way."

They followed their host through the hall onto the terrace, which overlooked the Loch. Dicky MacGregor was there and looked quite as in the old days, and, as might be expected, he was in good spirits.

"Hello, hello, my dear friends," he said. "Sorry for not contacting you for a little time, but the laboratory had gobbled me all up again, and then time flies, you know."

"Well, it seems you have finally got your precious results," said Michael.

"They have been interesting times," Richard beamed.

"Congratulations Richard!" said Sheila.

They all stepped onto the terrace, and Sheila opened her bag with the vintage whiskeys. "We brought you some presents, which I hope will suit you. I'm not at all sure you are all whiskey lovers."

Archie's red bush of hair descended nearly into Sheila's handbag, and exclaimed: "Yee!! Ho!! Where on earth did you get that kind of whiskey! They are age old, and must have cost a fortune!"

"Well, as old innkeepers, we have our connections, you know," said Michael, blinking an eye to Sheila.

"Which bottle would you take, Dicky?" Archie asked.

Richard took up the 25 years aged bottle of Speyside, and said: "Amazing! I think I'll have this one. Really special! Ever so much thanks!"

“Then I’ll claim this one!” said Archie. “Let’s see now: distilled in 1961 in the Lagavulin distillery, 25 years matured in sherry casks, bottled in 1986 in Edinburgh. A real treasure! What a rare present! Thank you so much! Unbelievable!”

“They are from Kilbirnie,” Sheila explained. “I had the most peculiar whiskeys there when I met Michael 36 years ago. We just visited the place again today, and it seems they still had lots of rare treasures in store, like this Ardbeg.” She showed the third bottle. “This one has, unfortunately, been tasted already.”

“Also a real treasure, I see... but *then* we must all have a wee dram,” said Archie. “I’ll get some brandy glasses. Mind you, we’ll have to hide these delicacies from President Kennedy!”

They had seated themselves and enjoyed the low sun above the Loch and the heavily peated whiskey. Archie expounded about the renovation of old castle Lachlan, after Michael had enquired about it. As it turned out, the present castle was only used for official proceedings, and Archie remained living in the family mansion further along the road to Leanach. Then, in the midst of a sentence, he suddenly said: “Now that we are still under private eyes, I should not forget to return this curious artefact.” He rose and went into the house, and after a while returned with a dark brown wooden case. Carrying it under his arm carefully, he entered the terrace, and put it before Michael on the table. “Just in case, before I forget in the rumble and jumble of the party.”

“Thanks for returning it,” said Michael. “Why did you keep it so long, Richard?”

“I’m awfully sorry to say that our investigations took a bit longer than originally planned,” said Richard. “Ever thought how old this mirror is?” he then asked.

“No clear idea, but it was part of the objects in the sarcophagus of Mnemosyne,” said Michael, “so I speculated that it was a mirror that must have belonged to the goddess who goes by many names. It could be very old indeed.”

“Well, that it would have belonged to the White Goddess, which some call Mnemosyne, some the Sibyl and others Cybele, would be very odd, and our research tells us otherwise. It turned out to be a Persian mirror from the time of Xerxes the first. Although the time of fabrication could not be established due to the fact that the materials are a bit odd for dating, the glass is pure quartz, and the frame an odd mixture of silver and germanium, there are some clear inscriptions that reveal it was a present of Xerxes’ wife to the wife of Democritus. It was a wedding present!”

Michael looked at Sheila and said: “That is new to me.”

“Well, that suggests that Democritus donated a bit more to the oracle than he wrote in his diary!” said Sheila.

“So it seems. After getting acquainted with all the momentous writings and translated texts of your elusive father, Ma’am, we decided that the wife of Democritus must have benefitted much from it,” said Archie.

“You see,” Richard added, “the mirror was given as a counselling device, as it reads in the text at the side of the mirror, in Koine Greek.”

“Well, that is all very surprising,” said Michael. “Must I conclude that Archie is now also informed about our family drama?”

“As far as possible I tried to be discreet,” said Archie. “Old mirrors, however, are a bit of my hobby, and actually mirrors of this type, based on quartz, weren’t officially invented until about first century Rome, while mirrors made of polished stone, like obsidian, were known in Anatolia and Persia much earlier, particularly in wedding rituals.”

“It is a long-standing tradition that in Persian weddings the *Mirror of Fate* plays an important role,” Richard said in turn. “You see, there is the *Mirror of Fate* and then there are two candelabras, as the symbols of light and fire, and when the bride enters the room, she is still veiled, but when she seats herself beside the bridegroom and removes her veil, the first thing that the bridegroom should see is the reflection of his coming wife in the mirror. These Persian wedding rituals go back to Zoroastrian times, which include the era of Democritus, of which we

already found out so much. Maybe this mirror was left in Delphi on purpose, for us to find. So... high time you get it back!"

"For us to find? Are you sure?" asked Sheila.

"Seems plausible," said Richard.

"I doubt that," said Michael.

"Well!" said Archie. "At least, we have relieved ourselves of this burden now, and I suppose we should start dressing, because I think the bus with the brass from Edinburgh is coming soon. Upstairs there are a few dressing rooms. Jenny, my wife, will show you!"

After this warming-up conversation Sheila and Michael were shown into a neat, small guest room to get dressed. The bedroom, with a window bench entirely embedded in the thick castle masonry, looked inviting and Sheila and Michael rested a little while on the double bed. From downstairs the clattering of cutlery and glasses, some muffled talk and the typical scent of whiskey sauce entered the room.

"Would it go very late?" asked Sheila.

"Depends," said Michael. "Maybe Richard starts lecturing again. He can be rather long-winded, and it generally means trouble when he does so. Besides, Archie is also quite an orator."

"Really? Maybe we are in for an entertaining evening then."

"Hmm... I'm almost sure I've seen a picture of this mirror somewhere, but I'm not sure now where," said Michael.

"Maybe we should give it to a museum."

"Like the sword of Richard Cameron... all for free?"

"Well, depending on the authorities, of course. It should be brought back to Greece. Don't you think so?"

"Sure! I don't want any additional trouble with these spooky artefacts of that trunk. The Greeks can have their numinous treasures back. Let *them* sort it out!"

"Hmm... but suppose Maria really left it for us to find," said Sheila.

"In her last moments? Can't really believe that. It all happened so fast!"

"We have been carrying quite a load of history, starting with dad on

the moors, and then ending up in Delphi like that.”

“They were asking a lot of tedious questions after I brought that sword to St. Mungo’s Museum. Couldn’t pay any money... didn’t even say ‘thank you’... Strange folk... After all the things your father had brought to that museum, I’d hoped they would have had more understanding. Almost treated me like a criminal. *‘Better take that rusty thing back home,’* was the final verdict. Hope they are a bit more grateful in Athens.”

“Beats me why father had that sword concealed all the way in that far corner of the attic,” said Sheila.

“Well, certainly another interested collector will appear someday. Have you now got rid of all those damned video disks?” said Michael, referring to the huge collection of DVDs that Sheila’s brother had left behind when he had moved out five years earlier.

“Yes, I brought them to Barney’s bookshop. Got only eighty Euros for them.”

“Half a Euro per piece? Outrageous! He sells them for five! You should have brought them back to Jim in Paisley.”

“He didn’t want them back. He had seen enough: *‘Old hat’* he said. Well, I don’t really have the energy to bother. Barney was near, but I held on to the Chief-Inspector Morse.”

“Ah, yes, maybe we should look at those. They must still be quite good.”

“Still old hat. I also kept the George Eliot series. I didn’t even know they had filmed *Silas Marner*.”

“The weaver of Raveloe.” Michael hummed.

“Yes, played by Ben Kingsley, by the way.”

“Interesting... something nice to keep for the autumn. Let’s go then,” said Michael and girded his borrowed kilts with black knife, skirt pin, belt and buckle, and finally his new brogues. When they arrived in the great hall, the presidential catering service had laid out a splendid dinner table, which would make a Rôtisseur faint. Some of the high officials had also arrived with their entourage. Finally, some friends and

colleagues of the host and the laureate arrived, as well as Richard's wife. Michael approached her and said: "Hello Theodora, nice to see you again, has been a long time."

"Dorothea it is, not Theodora," she said with a short giggle. She was dressed in a stately, dark-violet evening dress, and wondered where Richard was.

"Sorry to say he went up for dressing," Archie interjected, who was standing nearby. "Nice to see you Thea! Good that you could come."

"I never get to see him enough," said Dorothea. "Hope he will now finally retire, and leave all this laboratory toil to his younger colleagues."

"Well, I cannot comment on that, my dear lady," said Archie, and then he drew away.

"Maybe I can persuade him to take it a bit easier," said Sheila from behind.

"Oh! Sheila! *There* you are! I've always kept wondering how you are. Still playing the violin?"

"Yes, yes, I still play," she said.

"Still hooked on Bruch?"

"Sure! Couldn't abandon my poor, underrated composer, could I?"

"And what have you been doing with *your* time, Michael?" she then asked, briskly turning her head.

"Oh, not really much, lots of renovation, cooking, uhm..."

"He has been keen on refurbishing old audio equipment from the seventies and eighties," Sheila added.

"Oh, so you are now in electronics too?"

"Yes, not so difficult. That is... if you only take care not to electrify yourself."

"It seems many people have such a hobby nowadays, renovation and refurbishing," said Dorothea.

"Certainly for people of my generation, yes. The collectors are forming a tight community. Prices are soaring!"

"So, no chemistry any longer?"

"No, no, as far as cooking goes," Michael said.

“And no more Alchemy either!”

“Dear me, no!” said Michael.

Gradually everybody had assembled in the castle hall, and then everybody turned around, to watch the arrival of President Charles Kennedy. He had a small entourage with him, a clerk and his secretary. Archie approached him from the crowd.

“Welcome, Mister President!” he said with a quick nod.

The president of the Scottish Republic bowed in every direction, and said: “Please, let us proceed. Where is our laureate?”

Richard then stepped forward, and with a genteel bow he shook hands. Archie had stepped onto a small pedestal in the middle of the hall and addressed the small crowd.

“Dear all. Welcome... Welcome... For the second time we are gathered here in Strathlachlan to bestow honours on one of our countrymen. Please, before it all starts, I summon you all to take in hand a glass of champagne or other.”

He stepped down again, and the President with his clerks and Archie convened at a small table to spread out papers and a small box with the medal. They had a short discussion on the proceedings. Richard stood all quite by himself in the middle of the hall. Waiters went round with drinks of all sorts. There were now about twenty five guests, and they all took a glass in hand. Soft murmur spread through the hall. Sheila whispered to Dorothea: “Where did Archie get such splendid chandeliers for his hall. Must have cost a fortune!”

“I heard from Dicky that Archie made them himself. He seems to be a very good renovator, and did almost all the decorations too. Many additional items were brought in from museums,” Dorothea replied.

Archie again stepped onto the little platform. “Dear all. I give to you our President, Charles Kennedy!”

It was now time for the official program. President Kennedy had a great gift for short but edifying speeches. Now, the speech he gave was even shorter, and somewhat less informative.

“Dear ladies and gentlemen! Beloved friends, revered laureate!

Today we celebrate the second time, as two years ago, the bestowal of honours on a great man of science, and this time it is the right honourable Richard MacGregor. We do this now in the magnificently renewed edifice of Archibald MacLachlan, our talented First Speaker of the New House of Commons. I see he has made a good job of it. So first a short *Hail* to Archie MacLachlan!” He rose his glass, took a little sip, and all followed his gesture.

“*HAIL!*” they all cried out. Archie only smiled and blinked an eye to his wife. They all took a sip of their champagne.

President Kennedy then continued: “We all know that objective science and daredevils with whistles have likely saved us from immanent peril in the first quarter of the 21st century, if we still may hope for 4 years of world peace and even a renewed European Union... At least we can then thrash this ridiculous EU border in the middle of the British Isles. Still we have some serious *natural* threats to deal with. Among those was the viral disease of Ebola, which spread in 2017 in South-West Africa again after a four year slumber. In our National Science Strategy we put it priority number one, and made funds available for the eradication of this dangerous virus, aiming at an effective antidote or vaccination program. In Glasgow there was already a large group working on the subject, and it was our honoured laureate, doctor MacGregor, who applied to lead the group some four years ago. The project evaluators were not deterred by his prison sentence, because it seems he did more in jail than anyone of us ever could have done to edify himself, and they were quite tempted by his audacious research plan. Of course his credentials in this area were outstanding. Now it seems he has not only solved the problem, but even in less time and money than originally planned. Therefore, it is with the greatest joy that I proclaim Richard James MacGregor winner of the Bairden Prize for Medicine. Hail MacGregor!”

“Hail!” everyone cried again, and took a sip of wine.

“Rest me to pass the word to Archibald MacLachlan, for a few more words, his prerogative as First Speaker, as we all know.” All people

passed a muffled laugh, the President stepped down the platform, and Archie rose onto it.

“Dear all! Before the official handing over of the prize, I like to take the opportunity to speak a little word on the background of this prize. First of all, there is - entirely by chance, I should stress - an interesting circumstance connecting our laureate with the founder of the Bairden Prize, Kenneth Bairden. Both, as it were, stumbled in their career rather seriously, but after some time were able to correct their errors in a way that proved highly beneficial. Both acted unconventionally, and with their actions demonstrated that errors in judgement can be made, but that by sincerity and adhering to the scientific ethic of objectivity, as well as showing considerable courage, matters can be corrected and the outcome can be highly positive both to science and to our new Scottish Society. Resilience to financial temptations, into which trap many have fallen, remains at present our strongest point, and the application of righteous laws, as well as handling - with care, I should note - the instrument of pardon has led us to a constitution, which we could even call - and I say this as an atheist - Christian!”

“Hear, Hear!” a male voice in the crowd yelled, and everybody applauded.

“Secondly, I should emphasize that nobody does research alone. To that subject I hope Richard will enlighten us more later on. My third point is that good progress in Science requires - I hope you all agree - a certain amount of philosophical deliberation. Some call it strategic thinking or vision, but I rather like to think of progress in Science to be driven by philosophical interest, and this requires knowledge of the general progress that has been made in history in philosophical matters. Not considering the corrupting effect of money and the overall herd mentality, which has greatly expanded in the recent past, we actively in Scotland set out this new paradigm of revisionist enlightenment, and this has helped us foremost in our reformulation of the targets of scientific research. I won’t dwell on the subject long, but at the moment we can say that we are now moving successfully along this line.”

Here Archie took a little breath and a little sip. “You see, there is such a well-known thing as the *Hype Cycle*... first there is the technology trigger, usually in the form of a scientist - or a group of them - finding something strange, something new and unexpected. These results - whether found by total chance or some form of serendipity, even sometimes by an error - are not visible directly, apart maybe from a short mention in a letter in a scientific journal, or a poster on a conference, but on their publication this results in a sudden rise of expectations. Now the visibility of these expectations is suddenly rising to a level far beyond their real worth. This is the hype. So, after this, fairly soon, one will see *the piercing of the bubble*, and we see a downfall of expectations into the *trough of disillusionment*. Now, in this process we suddenly end up in a state of frustration which is far *below* the actual and very real worth of the original finding. So, what happens is that investors withdraw, patents are abandoned, and research groups start looking for new subjects. Like a huge flock, many groups work on the same subject, then are disappointed, and start looking for other innovations, virtually throwing all the earlier results in the dustbin. Despite the hundreds of patents and publications, it seems everybody is suddenly in a state of complete amnesia - a bit like entering a great shopping mall and having planned to buy only a loaf of bread, but ending up buying Swiss cheese and forgetting your loaf of bread.”

There was again muffled laughter and Archie made use of the opportunity to finish his glass and snatch another one.

“Now, we then should enter the *Slope of Enlightenment*, re-evaluating our technology, and then with great care attain the *Plateau of Productivity*, instead of throwing it all away.”

The public gave a small applause at this point.

“Thank you, thank you, but this is not my idea, but Gartner’s. Anyway, when we thus come to this staggering finding that all we have to do is to look into our dustbin, and match our present needs with old findings, we may actually be on a slow, but certain track of getting our society arranged, our greatest problems solved, and our economy on a

steady, albeit small, growth.”

Yet applause from the public.

“Now, this is what we - at least in a small degree - have achieved in the issue of Ebola. There were huge bodies of results lying around, and it was Richard MacGregor who tied them all together. That is his greatest accomplishment!”

Applause, cheers and glasses were now raised in Richard’s direction.

“Therefore, Ladies and Gentlemen, I now call on our beloved President, to proceed with the ceremony!”

Silence now ruled the hall. The President stepped forward with his two aides, one carrying the chained medal, and another the framed charter.

“I, Charles Peter Kennedy, minister of the Republic of Scotland, hereby - with great joy and reverence - bestow on our citizen Richard James MacGregor the Bairden Prize of Medicine, earned through a lifelong commitment to a branch of Medicine directed to find a cure for viral haemorrhagic diseases in humans, particularly *Ebola* and *Marburg*, and having successfully implemented the cure in a vaccine. Please, Richard, step forward.”

Richard moved closer by, and the President first took up the medal. Slowly he placed it over Richard’s head. The secretary then came forward and handed over to Richard the Charter. The president then braced the laureate firmly and kissed him on the cheeks in his typical fatherly way. Archie stepped forward and recited a well-known ode:

“May there always be work for your hands to do.

May your purse always hold a coin or two.

May the sun always shine upon your window pane.

May a rainbow be certain to follow each rain.

May the hand of a friend always be near to you and

May God fill your heart with gladness to cheer you.

HAIL, Richard, HAIL!”

Again shattering applause and *Hails* resounded from the small crowd. “Speech! Speech!” they now all shouted. Richard took place onto the platform, and silence again ensued.

“Dear mister President, much obliged for this awesome prize, and thanks to you all, dear colleagues … and friends, for showing up and giving me such a grand evening. I’m really happy, of course. What can I say… happy that you came… grateful for the prize… warm inside… also because of a wee dram of whiskey in the afternoon, which I needed to get started.”

Muffled laughter among the crowd was heard, and Richard looked up to the chandelier.

“I should say though… well… that still something nags at me, and that is that almost everything related to this work I owe to a family who has bestowed on me a rare form of compassion. If it was not for them, I might have easily gone down with the military-industrial complex at the other side of the Atlantic and not be here. Thus, first of all, my deepest regards to Sheila and Michael Willmore! Slàinte!”

Everybody raised the glass again, and had a nip.

“Related to the subject of Ebola and such, I should say that the road was long, but really never an obsession, as various opportunities arose that somehow had always something to do with the more general subject of blood coagulation, genetics and molecular biology. In fact, I started studying on the subject of blood coagulation already in the mid-eighties in Glasgow, and in the process got involved also in the genetics of blood coagulation factors. Then through some unfortunate circumstances I escaped, literally, to the US, where I was employed first at a notable university, where we tried to fulfil the great expectations raised in the construction of markets, products and user needs during the early development of gene therapy, to say it with the slogan that was used in that time. However, after 9/11 I was coaxed to work for a federal research agency, and in that time they were getting funding for the most horrid defence projects one could imagine. In that time I came to know Michael Willmore who was working on a subject my

peers were interested in. In the end they just bought the patent, but left it on the shelf, as they often did. The whole affair got me, in an indirect way, into prison. Once in prison, however, I found lots and lots of time, and in the bargain I found a whole range of old publications in the library, related to blood coagulation, among others. As it seems, some of the Universities had donated their older printed journals to the prison library, and it gave me much pleasure reading those, not only for their courteous, archaic style, but also because they revealed that their writers were actually quite undaunted investigators, who with their limited means, at least compared to today, made astonishing progress. From these readings I could look at the subject with a fresh eye, and, as always, I combined a few old and new subjects into a proposal, which now has led to this nice cure. For this I have to thank my colleagues, most of them being here. Also to them: Slàinte!"

Yet again glasses were raised.

"As I see now that most of our glasses are getting nearly empty, I also like to thank my good friend Archie for his great support. Although his subject is law, and mine is chemistry, I hope our results will be genuinely legal and safe in their application. Here's to Archie! Cheers!"

Now glasses were really empty, and Archie invited the crowd to take place at the dining table, guiding people to their appointed places. President Kennedy was situated at the head of a large oval table. At his left was Archie, at his right was Richard, and all his colleagues were placed to his right to the other end of the table, while at the opposite side the friends and officials were intermingled. New glasses of wine were poured.

They had hardly got seated, when President Kennedy rose again and proposed yet another toast. "In this time we should also not forget our brave new country, the best country in the world, as everyone would agree. This is, of course, in absolute terms always an overstatement, but in relative terms, for us here on this spot, the only truth. *Alba gu brath!*"

"*Alba gu brath!*" they all yelled. They all sat down and slowly a low

murmur of speech ensued. Sheila was seated next to Archie and inspected the menu to find the main course to be salmon with whiskey sauce, her most favourite dish. She peered at Archie and said: “So, no Haggis then?”

“Oh, dear me! *No!*” said Archie with a glance of disgust.

She then turned to her other side and asked: “What do you think, Mike?”

“Looks impressive. There are also four glasses, so I think we should take care.”

“Nearly sorcery,” said Sheila to her host. “We were only half an hour away and in that time this whole table appeared out of nothing.”

“Yes, and at the end of the evening it will disappear equally swiftly. It’s the catering service of the Presidential Palace, you see. They *are* sorcerers. Of course the salmon is from Loch Fyne. It is actually rainbow trout, which they have started to grow here.”

“Oh, I’ve had that in Finland!” said Michael.

“The local grower is, in fact, from Finland, if I recall correctly... Well, starters are coming,” said Archie.

Two ladies started to serve small bowls of chanterelle soup and two gentlemen in smoking filled the small goblets with medium dry sherry.

“Well, *santé* then,” said Archie.

For a while they enjoyed their soup.

“And, how *was* Finland?” asked Archie, addressing Sheila.

“I haven’t been there, but my husband went there with a friend.”

“Have been in Helsinki a few times, for official business, but I didn’t get acquainted with the scenery yet.”

“Weren’t you there for the new EU membership formalities? That must have been a tough meeting,” said Sheila.

“In the end it was all quite clear. The Finnish government had exactly the same demands as we had concerning the constitutional laws, and they helped us a lot. Think of what they had to go through after the big crash. So how did you like the country, mister Willmore?”

“Call me Mike, please. Yes we saw Helsinki, Tampere, Turku and

finally some small place in the middle of Finland, a summer cottage, where we spent a whole week.”

“It was a sad holyday,” said Sheila. “It almost finished their friendship.”

“Oh dear!” said Archie. “What went wrong?”

“Well, it was my fault, really. I had a bad mood and wasn’t really up to a long holyday in such a far country. Pierce was fussing in the end so much that it started to work on my nerves.”

“Pierce is your friend?” asked Archie.

“Oh, yes, very good friend... still is.”

“But you got into an argument of some sort?” asked Archie.

“Yes, in one of my cynical moods, he started suddenly to shout at me, calling me a hypocrite.”

“Ouch, that stings!” said Archie.

“It sure did... but he was right, I have to admit.”

“Well, after all Dicky has told me about you, I wouldn’t be so worried about being a hypocrite. We all are to some degree, living in the rich West... now somewhat less rich, but all the same. Think of these poor people in the devastated towns and villages in the Middle East and East Africa.”

“You were always complaining about trifles, Mike,” said Sheila with a little scorn in her tone.

“Well, now I have no complaints left, since we bought the hydrogen car!” said Michael. “No more expensive petrol!”

“You mean the new Toyota Mirai?” asked Archie.

“Exactly!” said Michael. “Beats me how they pulled that off. Exceptionally hard to do, especially after Toyota released all their patents on the fuel cell.”

“Indeed,” said Archie. “Expensive vehicle. Where did you park it?”

“At the camping nearby, we will stay the night there,” said Sheila.

“In the morning I definitively have to have a look. I am considering buying one myself.”

“Please, come and have a look,” said Sheila.

At this point, Richard tinkled his glass with a little spoon, rose and addressed the party again: "There is still one point I would like to raise and that is about what I'm going to do next. I intend to take up, finally, my pension. The project is finished you see, and so am I... I really have neglected my wife, who I know since childhood, and we have plans to go and travel. Be sure that I will not do this at the expense of the University, because the great sum of prize money I will leave - it goes without saying - to Strathclyde University. Where I will go, I leave to my wife to decide, and I gratefully thank also her for her patience and support."

"Hear, hear!" they all exclaimed.

Next to Michael was seated an unknown woman, and he introduced himself to her.

"I'm Eleanor, the sister of Dorothea," she replied. "Have heard a little about you. Weren't you the guy who tried to save Richard from jail in Madeira?"

"Yes, yes, he was quite innocent, really. It was a mere accident that was shovelled on his head. Now, Dicky was a bit of a fly-by-night person then, but it turned out that the police inspector that handled the case was not much different!"

"Oh dear!" said Eleanor. "How worrying."

"Mind me saying, but you are the spitting image of Anna Russell," he then said, in an attempt to change the subject.

"I've heard that before," she said. "Unfortunately I'm not at all gifted in singing and playing the piano, and not good at comedy either, but Anna has always been one of my favourite comedians!"

"Then you must have heard her short presentation of Wagner's Ring cycle?"

"Oh, yes, superb... and then her recipe of how to make up a Gilbert & Sullivan opera. That one I liked best." She then waved to the opposite side of the table. "Hey, Richard, what was the name of that police inspector who got you in prison?"

Richard turned from his conversation and said: "Why do you ask?"

“Just wonder what became of him!”

“It was Superintendent Benjamin Miller, and I think he is in a hospital somewhere.”

“Ah. How terrible! Was he *unstable*? ”

“No, but he wanted to know a little bit too much,” Richard said.

“How do you mean, ‘*know too much*’, about what?”

“Difficult to say, Eleanor. I didn’t know the inspector so well. You should ask Prince Hamid. He knew him better. Even Michael has seen more of him than I.”

“Was he a *wicked man*?” asked Eleanor shifting her focus to Michael.

“He was a longstanding acquaintance of our niece Maria, and she appreciated his company, so, I suppose he must have had his charms,” said Michael. “When I met him for the first time in Madeira we had a very amusing conversation at Maria’s house, and he very efficiently got me *out* of jail... that is, before putting Richard in it.”

“But he prided himself for being high in the police hierarchy, that’s for sure,” said Richard.

“Maria’s husband told us that his house in Funchal was sold, and he has not been seen back on the island,” said Sheila.

“Well, maybe we should make some inquiries from Prince Hamid,” said Richard.

“I’d rather try to stay out of trouble,” said Michael.

“Maybe best,” said Sheila.

One of the PhD students, a sportive looking girl, asked: “Prince Hamid? Sounds like a rich Emir. Who’s he?”

“He lives in Turkey, in the Kingdom of Phrygia,” said Richard.

“You mean to say that Phrygia still exists?” she asked.

“Yes, Milly... It is the smallest Kingdom on earth, effectively being not much larger than its capital, Gordianum. A bit like Monaco. Hamid was actually its King, but he abdicated five years ago,” Richard explained.

“You are pulling my leg, aren’t you?” she said with an amused grin. Milly was clearly the more inquisitive member of Richard’s group.

“No, not this time, but it must be said that during the struggles in the Middle-East they were able to keep out of trouble and out of the news. But also there the Royal house was not quite free from scandals, so I heard,” said Richard.

“So you actually have been acquainted with the King of Phrygia?” she then asked in an attempt to dispel her last traces of disbelief.

“Only shortly made his acquaintance... Benjamin Miller knew him better, and the King was willing to show us his secret treasury at the end of the visit. That’s where I left Superintendent Miller. Haven’t seen him since.”

At that point the soup bowls were collected and neat glasses with shrimp cocktail and grapefruit were brought in. This was all accompanied by a sweet white wine in a very small glass.

“Ah... Sauternes premier grand cru,” said Archie, “Don’t drink that every day!” He started to drink his wine with good taste, but didn’t touch his cocktail.

“Never had that wine before either,” said Sheila.

The party was suddenly a bit more silent, munching its second course, when Archie, after tinkling his empty glass, again rose: “I really would like to tell a little bit about a subject that came over the table a short while ago, namely *hypocrisy!*” At that point everybody knew that the host was going to absorb himself in an oration, which only he, as First Speaker of the House, was able to dispense, particularly at moments where the proceedings of parliament were stagnating. Somehow he had now found a subject on which to elaborate.

“What can we say about this burdensome vice of hypocrisy, in which we all are prone to be taken in at some stage of our life, and relate about this subject so that your precious fare would not start tasting bitter in our mouths? As William Somerset Maugham once wrote: *Hypocrisy is the most difficult and nerve-wrecking vice that any man can pursue: it needs an unceasing vigilance and a rare detachment of spirit. It cannot, like gluttony or adultery, be practised at spare moments, but it is a whole-time job?* Now...”

Roaring laughter arose from the table and President Kennedy bemusedly shook his head.

“Now, one might agree with that or not, but it must be said that hypocrisy has been the object of some serious scientific and philosophical study recently, and it seems the results of these studies are somewhat surprising. It is not only so that hypocrisy is a vice, but one classic writer said that hypocrisy is the *homage that vice pays to virtue*. If that is true, then surely hypocrisy can also be viewed as a more positive trait of human behaviour, namely the intent to keep up general moral values in spite of our weaknesses. This is already one of the conclusions Immanuel Kant came up with about this subject. However, Dante situated hypocrites quite low in the Inferno, namely in the Malebolge at level six, where the hypocrites were forced to wander around in circles, wearing, as a castigation, leaden robes, shining with gold on the outside, but awfully heavy to wear. Christians despise hypocrisy, because Jesus of Nazareth was a strong opponent of it, as shown by his treatment of the religious ruling elite of the Pharisees and other notables. As we all know about that, I do not need to expound further on the parable of the Splinter and the Beam. In the end, Jesus advised us not to pass harsh judgements, and follow beliefs in deeds and not words. Now, what then is hypocrisy? The best way to put it is that in certain instances, or by general trait, we can be inconsequent in our behaviour either towards our beliefs, our words, or even towards our behaviour in other circumstances. The main question is thus: from where does this inconsequence arise? Some have postulated that humans have a divided mind, essentially posing that the instinctive mind is sometimes in conflict with the rational mind. This is particularly so in specific cases where there is a sudden non-cognitive psychological factor, such as fear, jealousy, stress, temptations of some sort, which temporarily overrules our rational, moral conviction. However, there are also other types of hypocrisy, one particular, which I would call *Global Scepticism*. This kind of scepticism was very strong some ten years ago, when against all opinions, by the layman, the pundits, and the real experts

alike, things went very wrong indeed in the worldly theatre. There were whole schools of people, who shouted: '*You see? Didn't I tell you things would go like that? Now it is happening?*' But then it appeared that things in the longer run didn't quite turn out as these sceptics had foretold. We only had a partial collapse not a complete one. Things could have gone worse, but luckily they did not. This happened so many times, so that more and more people became - I was one of them - Global Sceptics. Normally, people who question everything loose complete ground under their feet, they spoil the atmosphere for others, start being grumpy and withdrawn, and - I just say it honestly - make hell for those who like to have an opinion about something, albeit a wrong one. And, what the hack, Johan Cruyff was quite right when he said that: '*It's better to go down with your own vision than with someone else's.*' I liked this so much in my years of entertainment that I just started re-thinking matters, and finally embarked on working for positive developments. And now I know that scepticism can become a form of hypocrisy. Am I right?" Archie nodded in Michael's direction.

"I cannot agree more," said Michael, "and I can boast of a long experience."

"Congratulations, then you have risen to my modest level." People were nodding their heads and looking with somewhat amused surprise at this sudden turn of conversation.

"Let me shortly pause, and tell a bit more about the forms hypocrisy has taken in politics."

Again the waiters came in and removed the cocktail glasses, and started to serve the rainbow trout with whiskey sauce, which was accompanied with a fruity red wine.

"I'd rather summarise that discussion," said President Kennedy, without rising from his seat. "What I just said about Scotland as the world's best country is, of course, a form of explicit hypocrisy, but everybody acknowledges that his feelings for his own country are always stronger than that for another country. It is only meant as a personal, subjective view, which everybody understands. Nobody

would say that their country actually *IS* the best in the world. Repeatedly we have seen in history what happens when such opinions strike root. This is a lesson we have now learnt again, and therefore our vigilance to spot this kind of hypocrisy is sharpened.”

Presently, they were all setting their teeth in the main course, but then Archie took up the speech again. “I would very much like to point your attention to Noam Chomsky, who was always apt to put his finger on Western hypocrisy. I should tell you a little anecdote about him. I think it was in the period just before the armistice in Syria, in 2012, that a BBC reporter took on Noam Chomsky about the drone program, saying that they had ‘*very well targeted the targets*’. Noam Chomsky first responded that the phrase *targeted the targets* is an awkward combination of a pleonasm and a euphemism. The phrase is wrong because it says twice the same thing without revealing anything specific, such as about *what* is targeted. Of course, *individuals* are targeted, that is *killed*, without due legal process. He explained that in plain language this is assassination. No matter how technologically advanced the method of killing is, it remains planning and carrying out murder. This is a criminal offence liable to prosecution. The BBC reporter then said that in the US and the UK the lawyers had decided that these operations are not illegal, because they are at war against terrorists; ‘*terrorists who have sworn to attack our freedoms. We have a right to defend ourselves*,’ he objected, and he thought he was clever. Chomsky then said something along these lines: ‘*Let us be clear about one thing, again linguistically, freedom - in the singular - cannot be attacked because it is an abstract entity, and as a motive for terrorism our so-called 'freedoms' - in the plural - are dubious at least, because they are not the same as the abstract form of the word. These 'freedoms' are more related to the exceptionalist policies of the US government. Now, let's consider - for a while - that the lawyers are right, and that in defence against imminent threat the drone attacks are legal. What then about the threat the Iranians perceive from some of the presidential candidates or newspaper tycoons, who openly profess that Iran should be bombed or wiped out, as some have literally said and written. Suppose the Iranians also have drones. Would we allow them to kill our citizens, who they perceive as*

dangerous? The reporter got white hot and said: ‘*But that’s an entirely different matter!*’ Chomsky then repeated the question, ‘*are these operations then legal or illegal?*’ The reporter exclaimed: ‘*For us they are legal!*’ Then Chomsky asked: ‘*So one set of rules and regulations for us and another set of rules and regulations for the others, is that it?*’ The reporter replied that the US Department of Justice has decided in various memoranda that they were legal. Chomsky, keeping his deadpan face, went on: ‘*These memoranda have never been published, so it is useless to speculate about their legality. In international law we must all abide the same rules and regulations, everybody knows this. The Magna Carta, the Geneva Charter, the Nuremberg Charter, even the plain US Constitution are all violated by these drone actions.*’ The BBC reporter, becoming somewhat weary, sighed: ‘*We have a right to defend ourselves!*’ Chomsky asked: ‘*In Pakistan? Have we had attacks from Pakistan? Has Pakistan declared war on the US?*’ The reporter said: ‘*No, but they harbour terrorists.*’ Chomsky was not ready with him: he presented a recent report by the law departments of New York and Stanford Universities on the drone strikes with the title *Living Under drones*. It pointed out that the drone strikes had exponentially grown under Barack Obama’s administration in various countries, especially Pakistan, and that a significant number of civilians had been killed, at least 10% of the total casualties. He posed that they had not targeted the targets at all well, that it was a big lie, and that in the end this cannot lead to anything but a further increase of hatred against the Americans, and thus more terrorist actions. Then Chomsky mentioned that Obama had recently instigated something called the ‘*Disposition Matrix*’ which Chomsky regarded as a nifty euphemism for *Killing List*, and that such an action must be regarded as wholly incompatible with the actions of a Nobel Peace Prize laureate. At this point, the journalist admitted he was less well informed. Still, Chomsky was not ready with him: he mentioned that the drone operations, and also the recent assault in Abbottabad on Osama bin Laden, were carried out in a country that has nuclear weapons. So, he concluded that the United States were wittingly increasing the risk of nuclear war. The US clearly was not

pursuing any credible peace agenda in the area, rather the opposite: it was actively pursuing destabilisation of the Middle-East. So, Obama, by deploying several covert military operations in a country with nuclear weapons, had brought the world closer to nuclear war, and thus it would not be inconsequent to withdraw his Nobel prize. The reporter was quite at the end of his tether, and he blinked an eye saying: '*Well, you have at least proven to be a great linguist!*' He chuckled clumsily and shook hands with Chomsky. End of interview."

"When was that?" asked Dorothea. "I don't recall such an interview on the BBC channels."

President Kennedy answered: "Sometime in the autumn of 2012, before *Damascus-Gate*. Of course, under Cameron the BBC couldn't air such a trouncing interview. To make things worse, the BBC decided to dismiss the reporter."

"Dismiss the reporter!?" Dorothea exclaimed. "They actually fired the reporter?!"

"Oh, yes," said President Kennedy. "A most unfair response, but the liberal party soon received a copy of the interview from the unhappy journalist. We kept that as a trump card for a while, but soon everything was over with Obama over the developments in Syria."

"I never much understood what is so heroic about pulling a trigger on someone, but these drone strikes really hit an all-time low... really the most callous and cowardice means of warfare one could think off," said one of Richard's male colleagues, who had not conformed to the dress code, wearing a Tam 'o Shanter with a blue tartan during dinner.

"I was always a bit surprised that Chomsky took such a stand-off position towards the 9/11 truth movement despite the puzzling evidence that was dug up literally out of the dust," said Michael.

"What evidence do you mean?" asked Archie.

"The nano-thermite residues, for instance. When questioned about the so-called conspiracy theorists, Chomsky put forward the obvious way to go forward in the dilemma, namely by writing credible, peer-reviewed articles about it in the scientific journals. Then the Danish

scientist Niels Harrit, with a whole bunch of industrious scientists, wrote this paper about the nano-thermite residues in the WTC dust, in which they even pinpointed a possible source of the substance.”

“The elusive red-grey chips, you mean?” said Richard.

“Indeed! You know about it too, Richard?”

“Yes, yes, I remember reading that paper,” he nodded.

“Ok. So, then Chomsky commented that he didn’t know what nano-thermite was, and that there was only a very small minority of scientists that actually believed in the suppositions of the 9/11 truth movement,” Michael continued.

“Well,” Archie commented, “The US government kept the lid on so many things that, when I visited him, Sanders whispered to me about his concern which issue would finish him first: the trillions of debt or the millions of secrets. Of course, the US government was solely to be blamed for the avalanche of speculations after the incident when against all odds they were opposed to any official investigations and took the side of the Saudis. It set in motion a counter reaction, and soon there was a shortage of whistles.” Some muffled laughter ensued around the table.

“Yes, about this nano-thermite paper I noticed that there had been no scientific rebuttal, but neither any confirmation of the results. Do you think the paper had enough merit?” asked Richard.

“It was a rather meticulous and elaborate report. Indeed difficult to debunk, I would say,” Michael said. “Mind you, there was an independent technical report in which they studied the same stuff, but they didn’t repeat the calorimetric experiments. Although they ruled out that it was some form of thermite, they were identified as anomalous particles, which could not have been from fire-protective paint or such. There was also one flaw in these crucial calorimetric experiments, namely that they should have been conducted under inert gas, like nitrogen or argon.”

“Thermal analysis was Michael’s former field of expertise,” said Sheila, to add a little weight to Michael’s points, but who was a bit

worried about the serious and technical turn the discussion was taking.

“I have never heard of this,” the Tam ‘o Shanter head said. “If this is true, this is quite unsettling!”

“I could hardly believe it at the time either,” said Sheila. “After Michael showed me this paper, we had a night-long discussion. What surprised me most of all was that the US government still didn’t pursue further investigations. Instead, some people in the media said that Niels Harrit was a crackpot.”

“Funny actually,” Michael continued, “the very first chemistry demonstration we got at high school was the thermite reaction, which our teacher performed in a stone flower pot. During the reaction you could see the liquid iron dripping from the hole at the bottom. When I recalled this to my good friend, Pierce, we decided to prepare a sample of nano-thermite ourselves, to see what it would do.”

“When was that?!” asked Sheila, abruptly enraged.

“Shortly after our night’s discussion,” said Michael.

“Did you get a recipe?” asked Richard.

“Yes, from the internet. A rather explicit seminar paper from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory,” said Michael. “It was mentioned in Harrit’s paper.”

“Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear!” said Archie, shaking his head in apprehension.

President Kennedy asked with some interest: “So... what was the result of your experiment?”

“It was only a small piece, but it gave a very loud bang and it made a hole in a soup tin,” said Michael. “There was no trace of red-grey chips, but there was a large amount of very fine iron particles.”

“You really can’t stop, can you,” Sheila whispered in Michael’s direction, “even after that disaster in Syria.”

“Sorry, sorry.” Michael muttered back.

The main course was done, but still some delicacies would be coming up.

“OK! As we are all still guessing about the relevance of the 9/11

conspiracy theories at this time, I rather propose to close this subject for this occasion!” President Kennedy ordained, raising his hand. “May I inquire how our other science guests feel about the reformed policies of the Scottish Research Council?”

At this moment a small after-dish was served, consisting of Pâté de Foie Gras with Madeira.

The keen girl of Richard’s group started: “Of course, for some of us it can become nearly a full-time occupation, to get stuck in filling out funding applications, but...”

“Is this Pâté de Foie Gras?” Dorothea interspersed.

“Yes, Ma’am,” said President Kennedy.

“I’m sorry, but I cannot eat this. The poor Geese! Really! Is there not something else?”

Archie nearly spurted his Madeira over the table in a roar of laughter. “There we are again! But Ma’am wouldn’t you say that this Foie Gras is a *fait accompli*, and that when it is now served and ready, you might be tempted to eat it, so that the suffering of the geese would not have been entirely in vain?”

“Nice try... but no! I don’t like the French tradition of *gavage*. That is, if you don’t know, overfeeding by force. We are Scottish, not French.”

“Really?” the sportive-looking member of Richard’s group said. “Maybe I just skip too. I’m already full.” The other members of her group remained eerily silent.

“Of course,” said Archie. “I will taste this anyway, but I will keep your hint in mind!” He made a courteous nod in Dorothea’s direction.

Now Richard whispered into his wife’s ear: “Why do you always have to make a scene at dinner over some petty opinion. Do you realise in whose company we are?”

“I will do nothing of the sort, especially when we are discussing ethical matters. I, at least, do not want to be called a hypocrite,” she said softly, but quite audibly to all the others at the table.

“But Thea!” Richard started, slightly raising his voice.

At this point President Kennedy raised his hand again, and said: "No fighting at this table, you hear! Matters of conscience take preference over table manners in this case. I side with your wife."

"Oh, sorry... excuse me," said Richard. He rose from the table with a red head, and made for the men's room.

"So, miss, what were you about to say? What's your name?"

"Millicent Roarke, mister President. These things are so technical, and I should say that the matter is that a few research groups have gotten in the habit of hoodwinking the evaluators in Edinburgh, making use of the opacity of the regulatory language. There is nowadays this blurred use of language such that the officials in Edinburgh understand things in a different way as we scientists do. I think the way we use language in our University differs from that of the regulatory circles in Edinburgh."

"Can you give me some examples," the President asked.

"Well, words like *contingency plan*, *deliverables*, *milestones* and such. They used to be material things, real results, not just reports. I have seen unsuccessful projects in which there were literally no tangible results, but the reports were written so cleverly that the officials even didn't recognise that the project had failed. Then these people went on doing nothing with *new* money, sometimes three times in succession."

"D'you mean to say this is on the rise?" asked Archie.

"I think it is getting less rare, and it is really not fair for those who get results," Milly stressed.

"Interesting," said President Kennedy, "it seems to be - *again* - a language problem."

"Science funding could be a very simple matter if every University would get a lump sum, and then they should be free to fish for other money on top of this, but these official funding bodies are completely obsolete. They use a third of the available state funding themselves for evaluating, selecting and patrolling the projects, which they do..."

Richard had returned and he frowned in the direction of Milly. He said nothing, but Milly was suddenly quiet.

“You were saying?” the President urged.

“... poorly,” said Milly.

The person of the research group with the Tam ‘o Shanter now spoke up: “Milly means to say that the official bodies take up too much money for themselves, too much time from us in writing reports for which they have too little time to even read them, and then - as this system goes on - these regulator scientists, who have sat there for *ages*, are increasingly out of touch.”

“Gosh, Archie, they are actually getting *angry*, these laureates,” President Kennedy said with a slight glance of amusement.

“Indeed! You agree, Richard?” asked Archie.

“Well, uhmm...” Richard muttered and didn’t reply.

“So, as we have now sunken so deep, you would not like to be in Edinburgh yourself, putting things right, Milly?” asked the President.

“No, mister president, I just like my work and would rather like the university to make all the decisions, closer to home, where we can regularly discuss all the salient issues. I’m not an administrator.”

“Point taken!” said President Kennedy. “I will take that home, and discuss matters straight away.”

It was then that dessert was served: ice cream with coffee and cognac. Not even Dorothea’s conscience couldn’t interfere with that choice.

There was a soft murmur around the table again.

“Great dinner, fine speeches,” said Michael softly to Sheila.

“Yeah, but Richard seems a bit dismayed,” Sheila whispered.

“Maybe a bit of shame?” Michael probed.

“Would he be in trouble with Thea?”

“Don’t know: it’s always difficult to part with one phase of your life and start a new one. Retiring is not easy, for some it is falling into the abyss of boredom.”

“Are you talking out of experience, Mike?”

“Oh, no, no. I manage quite well now. Don’t think Richard is in any real trouble either, but...”

“What then?” asked Sheila.

“I think there’s something in the air; unfinished business, perhaps?”

“Strange that you say that,” said Sheila. “I also have that feeling.”

“Hmm... Let’s wait and see.”

President Kennedy looked at his watch. It was not yet very late, but clearly he started to have some concerns about his return to Edinburgh. Presently everybody had finished dessert, and some had gone out to enjoy the scenery. The president of the republic still had something to say to Richard and to Archie, but then he started to prepare his leave.

Archie gathered the crowd together, and addressed his guests: “May I have your attention, please!”

Everybody approached and they all stood in a wide ring.

“As the evening is still young, I only say to you, please don’t leave yet if you have the time. We at least now have to say goodbye to our President, which we greatly thank for being at this occasion in his own person. Dear Charles! Have a good trip home!”

“Thank you all for this great evening! I even learned some things that were entirely new!” the President said. “Unfortunately I still have some business to do in the early morning and would like to have some sleep in between. To Richard MacGregor again many thanks for the good work and to his research team I wish good spirits.” He approached Richard and shook his hands. Richard made a clumsy bow, but looked cheerful again. Then Charles Kennedy took off with his chauffeur.

4.
Academic Interludium I

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String Theory and Theosophy

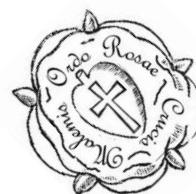
by

Matheos Dekalogos II

*Thesis for fulfilment of
Master First Grade
of the
Laudable Order of the
Rosy Cross
at
Maleme, Crete*

A.D.

MCMXCI



Preface

I hallow thee reader of this little treatise on the unification of Theosophy with String Theory. I may already in this preface convey to you my simple conclusions: God exists! We are in Him and He is in us! He is always with us, but is conceptually far removed from us. Still, He can be very well defined in mathematical terms, and this is the main purpose of this book. Unfortunately, this treatise only gives the theoretical framework without the data. The exact being of God remains unfathomable due to this. Clearly all the data that has been accumulated in the Pleroma is unfathomable.

Still any person, who is sincere and wise, already feels within himself, particularly when he adheres to the knowledge of the heart in equal measure as to the knowledge of the head, the true mission of God: His primary motivation was to conquer chaos and create order in the universe, and above all to create rational creatures that can perfect his creation by an ongoing purification process of the human mind.

God, however, also has his own worries: as a side product of creating order he also created anti-order. This is not chaos, but dark matter that has spread through the universe to oppose order, and create chaos again. His main task has been to keep these apart in the many local universes that exist. As the sole source for negentropy in the universe, this is his main struggle.

The thesis is also dedicated to describe the properties - in mathematical terms - of the four primary Aeons of 'survival' of the spirit: Armozel, the Aeon of grace, truth and form, Oriel, the Aeon of conception, perception, and memory, Dareithai the Aeon of understanding, love, and idea, and Eleleth the Aeon of perfection, peace, and wisdom. These mental properties have appeared as self-consistent solutions in an eleven-dimensional space much according to the rules of String Theory.

For all who walk in the Light of our Lord!

*Matheos Dekalogos II
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Maleme, Crete*



1. The Entangled Universe.



ATHOMING the deep, inexorable processes that have shaped our universe from time immemorial, even before time began, is a hopeless endeavour, even for the staunchest scholar. Hence, this thesis does not aspire to unveil the *First Cause* and the intricate nature of the so-called “Absolute”. It will rather deal with some interesting new insights that can be gleaned from contemporary theories of the universe and matter in the scientific realm, and attempt to place them side by side with ancient myths and concepts from the realm of Theosophy. Many components of the new physics, comprising *General Relativity*, *Quantum Theory* and especially the *Theory of Strings*, have distinct parallels in Hermeticism, Alchemy, and especially Theosophy. One may wonder why such clear intersections have not been uncovered earlier. Many brilliant minds, such as Herbert Spencer, Edouard Ouspensky, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Edward Arthur Milne and Arthur Eddington (to name only a variegated few) were greatly concerned with similar lines of investigation. It was only with the seminal book of David Bohm “*Wholeness and the Implicate Order*”, that an analogy with Theosophical concepts became evident to the present apprentice^{<1>}. Bohm’s theoretical framework is largely based on a reformulation of Schrödinger’s equation, separating the Newtonian terms from the quantum terms, the latter embodying the non-local phenomena that dictate an *implicate order*, i.e. a non-causal

order numinously imposed on processes that are intricately linked together in a *holo-movement* in time and space. He further uses this concept to shed light on the Mind-Matter controversy, mainly by pointing out the fact that thought must be seen as a process that is wholly embedded within this holo-movement. Referring also to the work of Karl Pribram, who postulated thought and mind as having a hologram-like structure, Bohm emphasizes the characteristic of ongoing process and wholeness, as it were a *living hologram*. In a separate paper on the subject^{<2>}, Bohm distinctly pointed out that in the quantum theory, which is his fundamental starting point, the particles of physics should be understood as having “*certain primitive mind-like qualities which are not possible in terms of Newtonian concepts*”. Although he argues whether these particles have consciousness, he affirms that “*on the basis of modern physics even inanimate matter cannot be fully understood in terms of Descartes's notion that it is nothing but a substance occupying space and constituted of separate objects*”. At the same time, he puts forward the argument that “*mind can be seen to have always a physical aspect, though this may be very subtle*”. In his treatise, Bohm thus leads us to the underlying nature of the relationship between Mind and Mater, mainly from the tenets of quantum theory, which no longer have the absolute distinction of basic qualities assumed by René Descartes and many of the modern materialists. To put it plainly, much of our problems in conscious existence lie in the fact that our mind is getting its input from a largely Newtonian macro-world through the senses, in which the quantum effects are not directly discernible, but the mind itself is located - at least partly - in the quantum domain. Our brain is, in essence, a quantum machine driven by chemical reactions and electrochemical messaging, which must include the numinous quantum characteristics, such as uncertainty and non-locality.

The disparity between *apparent* laws on the macro-scale and *intrinsic* laws on the nano-scale can sometimes lead to confusing situations. We occasionally have inner experiences that we feel as being related to outer events, or ascribe a particular *meaning* to external events that logically cannot exist by the laws of causality. The intuitive mind and the rational mind are thus every so often in conflict, and this is primarily due to the quantum aspects of the mind. As treated further on, *Quantum Entanglement* is only the first strange ingredient of physical phenomena we can try to understand with the aid of Theosophical concepts. Entanglement has also a slightly deeper meaning to us than merely the notion of a '*spooky action at a distance*': it also refers to our mind being 'caught up' in this material existence. This is perceived as a burden leading to the '*original sin*', something to be freed from, an always recurring motive in the higher arts. For instance, in some of the cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach we encounter this burden as a principal craving for death, where death is seen as a liberation from the bonds of material existence and sin. Hence, in the opening of Cantata BWV 8 Bach sets the text "*Liebster Gott, wann werd' ich sterben*" to the most pastoral and sprightly music he was capable of writing. Unfortunately, the more mundane person only feels the bonds of material existence largely at times when the mortgage on his house or other worldly obligations start making him anxious. It is because the quantum theory is so greatly at odds with the mechanistic conceptual framework of the classical laws of physics and our common understanding, that we have been slow in coming to terms with a primary misconception of reality. In the argument of David Bohm concerning the *implicate order*, the whole universe is in some way enfolded in everything and each thing is enfolded in the whole. Thus, each so-called 'separate' thing is internally related to the whole, and thus, to everything else. This notion is

analogous to the Buddhist and Theosophist ways of thinking about the cosmic order, and not merely passive or superficial. Bohm regarded it as “*active and essential to what each thing is*”. Following his argument, those new qualities of matter that have been observed at the fundamental level of particle physics appear operative at higher levels of organization, such as that of the brain and nervous system, and - one may logically add - the autonomous function of all living beings and their further organisation in functional societies. One can truly say that we are *Children of the Universe* - a known allegory - but also that the universe is a child of us - a more uncommon implication of the theory.

Inspecting the ramifications of the implicate order we end up with an interesting reformulation of the anthropic principle. The two conflicting views of anthropogenesis - either *conscious choice* (by a creator) or by *chance* (evolution) - are in the new framework united into one: *inevitable consciousness*. There is not such a thing as ‘*a lucky accident*’ that the molecules of life arranged themselves on this planet such that life could take off. As various logicians have affirmed, a universe without observers is virtually non-existent, and any process giving birth to conscious life is bound to happen when we consider the universe to be boundless, both in duration and dimension. To turn the argument around: the history of life on our planet proves that the universe *is* limitless, and that *anything* is possible: from dinosaurs to dolphins, seaweeds to trees, and ants to cockroaches, the plethora of creatures on our local spot.

If we now return to our main subject, entanglement, it must be pointed out that we are aware of it in many ways. In one of its clearest aspects we experience it as *Love*, which, in its more general form of *affection*, points to our innate capability to *feel a connection* between ourselves and other like-minded creatures, with that strange experience that you recognise somebody, even

when you had no earlier notion of that person's existence. Although one can say that friendship is the highest good on earth, human chemistry - an apt term - is not rational. Love comprises that fundamental process of becoming aware of the larger mental realm, and a return to wholeness on the mental plane; a return to the *collective unconscious*, as first formulated by Carl Jung - or rather so named, because the concept was already known to the Gnostics in the form of the *Pleroma*. Truly, in the realm of our collective unconscious are '*inscribed*' the memories of all populations of the Holo-universe. These present themselves to us in our subconscious state, such as in dreams, ideas and all other types of intuitions, and are called *archetypes* by Jung. The term *synchronicity* was also coined by him at a time when quantum entanglement was just starting to upset the scientific realm. A particularly lively account Jung gave in the introduction to Wilhelm's translation of the *I Ching*, the Chinese Book of Changes^{<3>}. The *I Ching* stands out as a monumental achievement, mainly due to its process of enumeration of mental states (the hexagrams and their inter-conversions). Indeed the ancient Chinese philosophy is full of examples that propound the concept of an unbroken wholeness of the mind and of the Universe, and utilises the intricate link between the *State of Mind* and the *State of the World* in a famous oracular technique, which strongly incites the *Inner Gnosis*. This concept was mostly exiled in the West by the authoritative Christian Church, and the rise of analytic scientific methods, but the original teachings of Christ were not very different from those of the esoteric Eastern religions, which are in basic essence Gnostic in nature. In the scientific realm we have now entered the stage of recognition that analytical methods, by dividing and dissecting the objects of our study, cannot eventually bring us closer to any real understanding of our temporal world. The biosciences have uncovered a

perplexing amount of molecules, of which the structural complexity and the mechanisms of their interactions are truly confounding. It was customary in the 1980's to refer to the larger part (95%) of our DNA as *Junk-DNA*, or *redundant DNA*. Only now at the start of the 1990's we are getting tools for studying molecular interactions directly, but it is only a minor step forward in our attempt to gain holistic understanding of the processes of Life. The Mind-Body controversy (dualism versus monism), however, is still far from being resolved, and it will take us far into the next millennium for scientists to adopt the new holistic world view. In the psychological sciences we have now clearly realised the presence of two aspects of the human mind: that of an intuitive and a rational one. The intuitive mind is likely a remnant of earlier evolutionary stages, and is always quick to jump to conclusions on its own authority^{<4>}. Intuition, in fact, still rules most of what we do. Although the intuition is badly schooled in statistics at least its connection with the pleroma is very strong. The slower rational mind - an addition to our psyche that is not much older than a million years or so - is firmly anchored in the material realm and has, at times, difficulties tracing the argument of its innate partner. It is essentially a utilitarian aspect of our mind, out there to conquer a relatively trouble-free existence, maintain social contacts on a practical basis, and indulge in entertainment of all kinds, nowadays a technology zealot of some sort. The entangled universe, however, is always present as a source of new surprises, which bubble up from it to give a new direction to the state of affairs through the *Time Spirit*. They are forces that the rational mind cannot easily manage. If disentanglement is not possible, a gnostic attitude is needed of introspection, such as Christ originally taught to his disciples. In this endeavour, Love (compassion) is the strongest weapon!

2. Ancient Beginnings

Strings and Music.



THE Divine aspect of Music has always captivated the inquisitive mind. Why has music risen to such a high position among the Arts? If we neglect the useless discussions among amateurs, to whom the present apprentice must reckon himself, and listen to those who have made of music their profession, we must take their word when they affirm that Johann Sebastian Bach was the ultimate exponent of a form of music that we could justly classify as *Absolute*. When composers are ranked for their innovation, influence, aesthetic importance and historical significance, almost invariably Beethoven comes up first, Mozart second, and Bach third. However, both Beethoven and Mozart virtually deified Bach. Oddly, there is not so much known about Bach's life. There is ample evidence that he was involved in a potentially music history threatening brawl with a bassoon-player in Arnstadt, that he overly extended his leave from court for a pilgrimage to Lübeck to meet Buxtehude, that he must have written parts of the Wohl-Temperierte Clavier in prison due to impatience with the Weimar court and that he not quite engaged in an organ competition with Louis Marchand, but many other memorabilia of his life are frequently disputed. Bach's life was steeped in death in the family, the whims of autocratic and bureaucratic rulers and the scorn and jealousy of teachers and other composers of his time. Despite this all, he managed to write so much music, that some have asked the question: "*Did he have even time to pray?*" The music of Bach has interested not only musicologists, but also mathematicians. A Dutch treatise, "*Bach en het getal*" (*Bach and the Number*)^{<5>}, uncovers that Bach used cabalistic numerology techniques in many of his major works. Although the treatises on the subject often overestimate its significance, one cannot reject the fact that

Bach employed numerology effectively as the Initiator of the most powerful and gracious music we know today. It is almost perplexing that in some of his works even the most barren themes and motives start to flourish through the many procedures of canonical intertwining, a technique that hardly any composer after him could rival - although we should acknowledge that Brahms, Guilmant and Reger got quite close.

The use of self-reference and formal rules in works of art, to instil a certain emotion or meaning when being made of insignificant elements, is one of the themes in the entertaining treatise of Douglas Hofstadter about odd, cognitive loops^{<6>}. Hofstadter quotes the use of "Gödel Numbers" which allow logical statements to be enumerated. The number-aspects of music, such as tuning systems, structure of harmony and melody, and eventually musical forms, were already known in ancient times, but were also closely tied up with the ancient (secret) mysteries. The earliest Muses were worshiped on Mount Helicon in Boeotia and were named Aoidē ("song"), Meletē ("practice"), and Mnēmē ("memory"), aptly indicating the prerequisites of musical practice. The three Muses were children of Uranus and Gaia, the latter (the Earth-Mother) being worshipped at Delphi from prehistoric times, long before the temple of Apollo was erected. In Hesiod's Theogony, of the 7th century BC, the nine muses were pictured as the offspring of Zeus (King of the Gods) and Mnemosyne (Goddess of Memory).

At about the same time the myths around *Orpheus* arise. In the *Secret Teachings of All Ages*, Manly Hall pictures Orpheus (Pythagoras) as the "founder of the Grecian mythological system which he used as the medium for the promulgation of his philosophical doctrines", also stating that he "was initiated into the Egyptian Mysteries, from which he secured extensive knowledge of magic, astrology, sorcery, and medicine"^{<7>}.

If Orpheus is the secret doctrine (Apollo) revealed through music (Calliope), as proposed by our famous American philosopher, we may augment his statement by proposing that the Mind is revealed through String Theory in the same way: the strings on the Bow of Apollo refer to the dimensions of the Material-Mental-Spiritual world, and besides having a tune they also have impulse. Hence, the use of the Bow both as a musical instrument and as a weapon represents the procreative power of Mental Vibrations and Harmony, as already understood by the Pythagoreans. The theories of Pythagoras and his secret brotherhood were all concerned with number theory underlying the Order of the Universe. The underlying rules of harmony have inspired very many scholars throughout the ages. Although it is still disputed whether Pythagoras was the real originator of the famous geometrical theorem or the ancient halftone scale that still today carry his name, we can safely state that the history of tuning (temperament) of instruments took off with him. There were still some 600 years to pass before Ptolemy of Alexandria came up with the first practicable diatonic scale in 120 AD. Further developments in harmony ensued in the Renaissance with figures like Gioseffo Zarlino (*Institutioni Harmonice*, 1558)^{<8>}, who was the father of the *monochordo diatonico sintonico*, our traditional major third tonal scale, followed in the Baroque period by Christiaan Huygens (*Cycle harmonique*, 1691)^{<9>}, who coined the 31 tonal system based on fifth tones. Also influential were Jean Philippe Rameau (*Traité de l'harmonie*, 1722)^{<10>}, Leonhard Euler (*Tentamen novae theoriae musicae*, 1739)^{<11>} and Giuseppe Tartini (*Trattato di Musica*, 1754)^{<12>}. Euler was one of the most eminent mathematicians of the 18th century. His work is remarkable, because in his dissertation on music he derived mathematical expressions for the ‘degree of sweetness’ (*gradus suavitatis*) of chords. In the purely mathematical sphere, he

formulated the Beta and Gamma functions, on the latter of which the earliest notions of String Theory were based. Among the later scholars in music theory we must reckon the Dutch physicist Adriaan Daniel Fokker (1887 – 1972) who in his lesser known, but notable treatise “*Arithmetic reflections on Music*” (1944)^{<13>}, was able to bring melody in the realm of numerology.

In stringed instruments the strings are tensed one-dimensional resonators, which follow the differential equation:

$$\frac{\partial^2 y}{\partial x^2} = \frac{m}{L \cdot T} \frac{\partial^2 y}{\partial t^2} \quad (\text{Eq. I.A})$$

where m is the mass of the string, L the length of the string and T the tension in the string. The harmonic series of the string is:

$$f_n = \frac{nv}{2L}, \text{ where } v = \sqrt{T/\rho} \text{ and } \rho = m/L \quad (\text{Eq. I.B})$$

in which v is the velocity of the wave in the string and ρ the linear density of the string. As already known to Pythagoras, our ear is adapted to hear the *ratio of frequencies* as recognizable intervals: $2/1$ (octave), $3/2$ (fifth), $4/3$ (quarter), $5/4$ (major third) and $6/5$ (minor third). The fifth harmonic is still pure, but the harmonic seventh ($7/6$) is perceived as dissonant. Among Fokker's accomplishments was the construction of a pipe organ based on the 31-tonal scale, which he erected in the Teyler's Museum in Haarlem, the Netherlands. The 31-tonal system is based on the approximate equality $2^{49} \approx 3^{31}$, while in the well-tempered tuning it is based on $2^{19} \approx 3^{12}$. The 31-tonal system is especially good for natural thirds and sevenths, while the fifths are not much better than in the halftone system.

About the “Sense” of Music

Given that there seems to be a numerical and mathematical basis in the structure of modern music at various levels, as

aptly summarised by Adriaan Fokker in his treatise, we still have not considered the broader significance of music as a form of art, in terms of its meaning. For some musical compositions the effect on our mental state is a very mysterious process. The inquiry of Wagner why it is that some music moves us to tears, while other compositions '*bear the attributes of coldness and indifference, even triviality and absurdity*' is basically still an unanswered question, albeit that Wagner himself alleged that the lack of expressiveness was due to Jewish influences. In matter of fact, history has proven him wrong, because some Jewish composers, like Schönberg and Mahler would carry music onto a completely new level of expressivity by partly dissolving tonality, a process that Wagner started more or less himself in the *Tristan and Isolde*.

In his series of famous lectures on music, Leonard Bernstein expounded on the various elements that make up the multilevel fabric of music^{<14>}. Starting with phonology, syntax and semantics, he embarks on the meaning of music, and arrives at the conclusion that tonality is innate in our conception of music, but that deviation from tonality is also a complementary concept in need of further exploration. He does so by reviewing some of the music of Mahler, Debussy and Stravinsky. He identifies the year 1908 as a turning point, because in that year Schönberg started his experiments in free atonality. Other highly important milestones after 1908 were achieved in increased expressiveness by using near or complete dissolution of tonality: the 9th symphony of Mahler, the 4th symphony of Sibelius, Schönberg's *Pierot Lunaire*. All these works are prophetic premonitions of the collapse of the "normal order", which was soon to absorb the world in the *Century of Wars*. Truly, in some major works of musical art a degree of transcendence can be found that connects with the larger spiritual realm, called here the *Pleroma* after the Gnostics.

The Pleroma as represented by the Lyre of Apollo

As we have alluded to above, the comparison and conjunction of musical and cosmological concepts dates from very ancient times, from myths of Orpheus and Pythagoras to the writings of Plato. The ‘*Ode to Apollo*’ from the *Orphic Hymns*^{<15>}, is particularly illustrative:

*Blessed Paean, come, propitious to my prayer,
Illustrious power, whom Memphian tribes revere,
Slayer of Tityus, and the God of Health,
Lycorian Phœbus, fruitful source of Wealth.
Spermatic, golden-lyred, the field from thee
Receives it's constant, rich fertility.*

*Titanic, Grunian, Smynthian, thee I sing,
Python-destroying, hallowed, Delphian king:
Rural, light-bearer, and the Muse's head,
Noble and lovely, armed with arrows dread:
Far-darting, Bacchian, two-fold, and divine,
Power far diffused, and course oblique is thine.*

*O, Delian king, whose light-producing eye
Views all within, and all beneath the sky:
Whose locks are gold, whose oracles are sure,
Who, omens good revealeth, and precepts pure:
Hear me entreating for the human kind,
Hear, and be present with benignant mind;

For thou surveyest this boundless æther all,
And every part of this terrestrial ball
Abundant, blessed; and thy piercing sight,
Extends beneath the gloomy, silent night;
Beyond the darkness, starry-eyed, profound,
The stable roots, deep fixed by thee are found.*

*The world's wide bounds, all flourishing and divine,
Thyself all the source and end are thine.
It is thine, all Nature's music to inspire,
With various-sounding, harmonising lyre;
Now the last string thou tunest to sweet accord,
Divinely warbling now the highest chord;
The immortal golden lyre, now touched by thee,
Responsive yields a Dorian melody.*

*All Nature's tribes to thee their difference owe,
And changing seasons from thy music flow
Hence, mixed by thee in equal parts, advance
Summer and Winter in alternate dance;
This claims the highest, that the lowest string,
The Dorian measure tunes the lovely spring.*

*Hence by mankind, Pan-royal, two-horned named,
Emitting whistling winds through Syrinx famed;
Since to thy care, the figured seal's consigned,
Which stamps the world with forms of every kind.
Hear me, blest power, and in these rites rejoice,
And save thy mystics with a suppliant voice.*

The general mood of this poem is the supplication for Apollo to be benignant to mankind, and provide it with inspiration for cultural growth, without which we shall all perish as Tityos did. The poet calls on Apollo to be congenial to mystics and their rites, in whose ears he whispers his inspiration and highest accord.

Some phrases, however, are expressions with a hidden meaning: the illustrious power '*whom Memphian tribes revere*' relates to the rites of the Egyptian priesthood which were transferred to Delphi by the figure of Pythagoras. He namely was initiated at Memphis, and later instructed the Pythia

Theoclea at Delphi^{<16>}. A power (a Bow) ‘*Far-darting, Bacchian, two-fold, and divine, Power far diffused, and course oblique*’ is a principle power, or powerful principle, that is dispensing arrows as a germ, fertilizing the fields, controlling the seasons, over boundless distances. The term ‘*far-darting*’ denotes Apollo as the choreographer of the Muses, reviving all things, but the roots and tracks of the power are unknown. As Apollo possesses the ‘*stamp of a seal*’, using it like the Demiurge of the universe, he impresses consequently all archetypal ideas of all sensible forms upon visible creations. However, as all forms subsist in indivisible union and immaterial perfection, their copied forms exist in boundless multitude and material imperfection. This means the origin of Nature lies in the harmonious tuning of the Universe as a whole in which there is no real scale and time, but where all forms are implicated, that is: enfolded in themselves.

As a matter besides, an interesting reference is also found in this poem to the Dorian key as the ‘*measure that tunes the lovely Spring*’. The 6th symphony of Sibelius is a distinctive example in the music literature, in which a certain translucency emerges suggestive of a regeneration process in Nature. Dedicated (without permission) to Jean Sibelius, Vaughan-Williams’ 5th symphony also employs Dorian modes similarly evoking the sensation of the emerging serenity of spring time.

All the interrelated forms and themes of Nature are thus implied in a “wholeness concept” that cannot be grasped by any mortal being, because he is bound by temporal and spatial restraints, a limited world that only imperfectly copies the concept of a multidimensional realm into a world more solid but more limited, a sunken world, which is as a cage to the soul. This is also expressed in the Platonic idea of the men in the cave who observe the shadows of the real forms moving outside, and who try to make sense of their observed reality. We call in our anxiety upon Themis, to show what art it is that repairs our

sunk affairs, because she was naturally vouchsafed to do so. Therefore, it would almost need a reconstruction of the ancient Oracle of Delphi and a newly anointed Pythia to resolve our fate in these unruly times, an endeavour that is nowadays quite unattainable, due to the great depth of our sunken state.

In mathematical terms, the main concept of the Cosmic Spirit inhabiting the Pleroma can be represented as a “vibrating structure”, a collection of vibrating strings in multiple dimensions. This is one of the subjects of this thesis. For our local universe ten dimensions are implied, but logically the amount of dimensions can be higher and reflect forms and concepts that create other worlds, as to us unimaginable. This “universal chord” resonates to bring about forms in lower dimensional worlds.

Where then do the homologous concepts of music and string theory originate? For this we look further at some theosophical concepts in the next chapter, but in the main it is something we all feel intuitively. To this concept also Hermann Hesse alluded in his book *The Glass Bead Game*:

*We re-enact with reverent attention
the universal chord, the Master's harmony,
eroking in unsullied communion
Minds and times of higher sanctity.*

*We draw upon the iconography
whose mystery is able to contain
the boundlessness, the storm of all existence,
give chaos form, and hold our lives in rein.*

*The pattern sings like crystal constellations,
and when we tell our beads, we serve the whole,
and cannot be dislodged or misdirected,
held in the orbit of the Cosmic Soul.*

The *Cosmic Soul* within the *Pleroma*, to which Hesse refers, is the actual topic on which he elaborates in his novel. He even forwarded a rudimentary idea of string theory in the phrase: '*The whole of both physical and mental life is a dynamic phenomenon, of which the Glass Bead Game basically comprehends only the aesthetic side, and does so predominantly as an image of rhythmic processes.*'

In the bible reference is made to the pleroma in many places: '*the whole completeness of the Divine nature*' (Colossians 2:9), or as '*the whole perfection of God*', (Ephesians 3:19). Gnosticism gives us descriptions of the pleroma in which the sense of totality is retained, but moreover connecting with Greek philosophy to either denote it as a '*state of completeness*' in contrast to deficiency, or as the '*fullness of real existence*' - in contrast to the superficiality of mere phenomena.

Neoplatonists use the concept of the '*ideal realms*' as derived from Plato's theory of forms. In more recent times, Arthur Lovejoy launched '*the principle of plenitude*' which asserts that the universe contains all possible forms of existence either in static or in evolving form^{<17>}, a tenet largely adopted from Plato's Timaeus. The latest reformulation of the concept of the pleroma, in a scientific dress, we find in the work of Rupert Sheldrake who coined the term *Morphic Resonance* for the non-local connection between similarly shaped and similar minded life forms^{<18>}. This corresponds to the concept of Wholeness as advocated by David Bohm. Sheldrake strongly condemns the mechanistic world view, and may well succeed in proving this concept by dedicated scientific research in the coming years.

Although the main focus of this study is on Theosophy, some older religious currents will be briefly reviewed. These are the Zoroastrian, Chaldaean, Cabalistic, Trismegistic, Platonic, Rosicrucian and Masonic teachings, Gnostic traditions which all adhere to the tripartite cosmology. In this system the lowest,

Material realm, which science seeks to unveil, is the level that is observable to our senses. One stage higher there is the realm of the *Mind*, which mediates between the lowest realm and the highest realm, the latter being that of the *Spirit*. The tripartite (or three-tiered) structure of the (holo)universe is the main precept of all Neoplatonic and Theosophical thought, and lies at the basis of all ancient religions and philosophies.

Zoroastrianism

The Zoroastrian tradition, named after the prophet Zoroaster, flourished in the pre-Islamic Iranian empires from around 600 BCE to 650 CE, and revolves around the godhead *Ahura Mazda*, the Lord of Wisdom, posing both *Being* and *Mind* as immanent entities, thus representing a pantheistic belief in an immanent self-creating universe with consciousness as its central aspect. *Ahura Mazda's* creation (as *Asha*, truth and order) is the direct opposite of chaos, (as *Druj*, falsehood and disorder), which are in a conflict that involves the entire universe, including humanity, which has an active role to play in this conflict.

The Zoroastrian cosmos is pictured as three-layered according to Earth, Atmosphere and Heaven. The earth was divided into six concentric continents, surrounding the central continent of the Iranian realm. At the centre of the earth was the *Cosmic Mountain*, which acted as the world axis. At its southern edge was the *Sacred Sea*, in the middle of which grew the *Tree of Life*. Over the earth and expanse of sky arched the stone *Vault of Heaven*, beyond which was the realm of the *Infinite Lights* and the heavenly abode called the *Best Existence* and the *House of Song*. Below the earth was the *Realm of Infinite Darkness*. The entire earth rested upon, and was surrounded by, the waters of chaos. *Chaos* is represented by *Angra Mainyu*, the *Destructive Principle*, while the benevolent forces are represented by the *Spenta Mainyu*, the instrument or

charitable principle of the act of His creation. As expressions and aspects of creation, Ahura Mazda emanated the *Amesha Spentas*, each representing an aspect of His creation. These are in turn assisted by a league of lesser principal spirits, the *Yazatas*. Ahura Mazda's ultimate triumph over *Angra Mainyu* is reflected in the four *Ahuna Vairyā* incantations:

1. Ahuna Vairyā

As judgment is to be chosen by the world, so the judgment that is in accord with the truth, which is to be passed on the actions of good throughout the world, is assigned to the Wise Lord Mazda, and the power is assigned to the Wise Lord Ahura, whom they established as shepherd to the needy.

2. Ashem Vohu

Truth is best of all that is good. As desired, what is being desired is truth for him who represents best truth.

3. Yenghe hatam

Among the living human beings whom Ahura Mazda recognizes as being more excellent by reason of their knowledge and practice of virtues, we revere all such men and women.

4. Airyaman ishya

Let the vigorous tribe come to the support of the men and women of Zoroaster, to the support of good thought following the religious view that will deserve a prize worthy of being chosen, we ask for the invigorating reward of truth, which Ahura Mazda has devised. ^{<19>}

The alert reader may already identify some of the tenets of Christianity in these lines. The concept of *hypostasis* as the shared existence of spiritual and corporal entities is evidenced in Zoroastrianism by the *Amesha Spentas*. Hypostasis (*ὑπόστασις*) means *underlying state* or *underlying substance*, and is the fundamental reality that supports all other realities. Instead of the rather non-specific meaning of *Amesha Spenta* (as *Bountiful Immortals*) is the use of the term to refer to the great *Six Divine Sparks* of Ahura Mazda, the first six emanations

of the non-created Creator, the strong, unbending pillars on which all subsequent creation was founded: 1. Good Purpose, 2. Truth/Righteousness, 3. Desirable Dominion, 4. Holy Devotion 5. Wholeness, 6. Immortality. The doctrine of the *Great Six* is that through good thoughts, words, and deeds, each individual should endeavour to assimilate the qualities of the Amesha Spenta into himself. They are in turn assisted by a league of lesser divinities, the Yazatas, each *Worthy of Worship* and each also a hypostasis of a lower moral or physical aspect of creation.

Zoroastrian theology is pantheistic and proclaims the duty to protect Nature. As one of its strongest precepts, the scripture calls for the protection of water, earth, fire and air and is thus an ecological religion. Many Yazatas are also linked with shepherds and cows, indicative of a farming community.

The oldest writings, by the prophet Zoroaster himself, are the *Gathas*, consisting 17 hymns. Translations differ strongly in the parts describing cosmogenesis (e.g. *Yasna 30.3-4*)^{<19>}, but all strongly evoke the dualist stance:

"30.3 / Thus are the primeval spirits who as a pair (combining their opposite stirvings), and (yet each) independent in his action, have been famed (of old). (They are) a better thing, the two, and a worse, as to thought, as to word, and as to deed. And between these two let the wisely acting choose aright. (Choose ye) not (as) the evildoers!"

"30.4 / (Yea) when the two spirits came together at the first to make life, and life's absence, and to determine how the world at the last shall be (ordered), for the wicked (Hell) the worst life, for the holy (Heaven) the Best Mental State".

The main imperative is: "You shall (therefore) hearken to the Soul of Nature!" The emancipation of the soul is the main goal of the earthly life, in which one should wisely choose. Thus, actively aspiring to good thoughts, good words, and good deeds,

without intervening hypocrisy, exercising the Free Will is the way to redemption in Zoroastrianism.

The Chaldaean Oracles

"Chaldæa" was a term the Greeks used for Babylon in the 4th century AD, as a transliteration of the name of the Assyrian area of *Kaldu*, situated southeast of Babylonia towards the coast of the Persian Gulf. As a religious movement, the Chaldæans were likely of the same progeny as the Zoroastrians, with the *Chaldaean Oracles* as their parallel scripture.

The Chaldaean (Persian-Babylonian), Israelite and Egyptian cultures later formed the Hellenistic civilization, which fused a Hellenic core of religious belief and social organization with the older "mystery religions". Likely, these religions all have a common source, located in the Egyptian mainland and are derived from ancient Hermetic scriptures in old Egyptian. In Egypt, the attempt to reconstruct the lost ancient religious content resulted partly in the writings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus. The Chaldaean Oracles, as a parallel strain, are on a smaller scale and present the wisdom specific of Chaldæa in a mystery-poem that has only come down to us through quotations in the works of the Neoplatonists. The poem's known fragments are found in the books of the later Platonic writers, such as Porphyry, Proclus, Psellus and Plotinus, who held these Oracles in the highest esteem. Iamblichus of Syria mixed in his own ideas into the Chaldaean Oracles.

The Chaldaean doctrine, according to Psellus, posed man to be composed of three kinds of Souls, which may respectively be called: (1) the Intelligible, or divine soul, (2) the Intellect or rational soul, (3) the Irrational, or passionate soul. The latter was regarded as subject to dissolution at the death of the physical body. The cosmologic structure is very similar to those presented in Zoroastrian scripture, comprising the three earlier

mentioned realms, in which each domain has a subdivision and overlap with the adjacent domains. Overlapping areas indicate coupling of the realms, either weakly or strongly. A key disclosure in the Chaldaean text related to our subject is:

“The Mind of the Father said that all things should be cut into Three, whose Will assented, and immediately all things were so divided.”^{<20>}

This may refer to the creation of the three sets (generations) of isomorphic elementary particles, together with their realms (fields), and is further related to the primacy of mind over matter. This will be discussed in later chapters of this thesis.

The Trismegistic Literature

By far the most abundant information on Cosmogenesis and Anthropogenesis is found in the Hermetic literature, particularly in that of the *Corpus Hermeticum*. The best overview of this literature was first compiled by the German scholar Richard Reizenstein (in 1904) and then by George Mead in his momentous “*Thrice Greatest Hermes*” (anno 1906)^{<21>}.

Although the scriptures of the *Corpus Hermeticum* were likely compiled between the 1st and 3rd centuries AD, in the Roman period, they are in all likelihood of ancient Egyptian origin, from the times of the early Pharaohs. Despite the fact that the vocabulary is strongly Hellenistic, as pointed out by Isaac Casaubon (1559–1614), more recent studies show that there is more correspondence with the culture of Pharaoh Egypt than previously understood. There are copious parallels with Egyptian prophecies and hymns to the gods and there is a notable comparison with Egyptian wisdom literature, which is usually presented in the form of fatherly advice to a son. Late Egyptian papyri contain substantial sections of a dialogue of Hermetic type between Thoth and his disciple. The view of

Egyptologist Sir William Flinders Petrie has remained that some of the texts in the *Corpus Hermeticum* date to the 6th century BC, during the period of Persian rule over Egypt.

George Mead has successfully demonstrated in his three volumes on the *Thrice-greatest Hermes* how Hellenism “philosophised” the ancient wisdom of Egypt. The Trismegistic writings are prose treatises in length far surpassing those of the *Chaldaean Oracles* and that of the Jewish and Christian pseudepigraphic poems known as the *Sibylline Oracles*. There are also strong similarities between the old Egyptian texts and Platonic writings, indicating that Plato and his followers based their philosophical principles on Egyptian sources (see paragraph below). The origin of the Hermetic writings was finally affirmed by the scrolls of Democritus, of which a large part has been retrieved and translated in our monastery very recently. They affirm the cosmological and anthropological views of the Gnostic/Neoplatonic doctrines of this thesis.

The process of creation and cosmological build of the universe is pictured in the *Corpus Hermeticum* right from the start in the first sermon, first as a vision to the apprentice, and then explained to him as follows^{<21>}:

“8... From Will of God, Nature received the Word (*Logos*), and gazing on the Cosmos Beautiful did copy it, making herself into a cosmos, by means of her own elements and by the births of souls.

9. And God-the-Mind, being male and female both, as Light and Life subsisting, brought forth another Mind to give things form, who, God as he was of Fire and Spirit, formed Seven Rulers who enclose the cosmos that the sense perceives. Men call their ruling Fate.

10. Straightway from out the downward elements God’s Reason (*Logos*) leaped up to Nature’s pure formation, and was at-oned with the Formative Mind; for it was co-essential with it. And Nature’s downward elements were thus left reasonless, so as to be pure matter.”

In this passage, the decisive element in creation is “The Word” or Logos, like the Bow of Apollo, but also there is already mention of the *Formative Mind*, the *Demiurge*, the *Artificer*, the co-creator of the Universe. Still, in general lines the Hermetic scripture is in agreement with the creation as pictured in the Bible in Genesis, and at the beginning of the Gospel of John.

Reference here is also made to the *Seven Rulers of Fate*, which are further treated in the chapter on Modern Theosophy as related to the Vision of Hermes.

Orpheus and the Platonic melting pot

Much of the material of the ancient teachings of the earlier ages found its way in the works of Plato, above all the teachings of Orpheus, Pythagoras and Socrates. As affirmed by Cicero, the Pythagoreans exercised a crucial influence on the work of Plato in three ways: Firstly in the *ideals of social organisation* as a tightly organized community of like-minded thinkers, which resembled the Academy of Pythagoras in Croton. Secondly, in their emphasis on the importance of *abstract thinking*, such as mathematics as a secure basis for philosophical, scientific and moral development, and thirdly, their shared idea of the *mystical soul* and its place in the material world. Plato strongly defends the importance of dialogue over rhetoric, as evidenced by the general form of his writings in the form of enticing discussions, which strike us as rather modern.

When referring to abstract thought, in several of Plato's dialogues Socrates forwards the idea that knowledge is a form of *recognition* or *recollection*, as drawn from a broader realm of existence, and not the result of learning, observation, or study. Thus, knowledge is not empirical, but is a divine gift. Plato advocates a belief in the *immortality of the soul*, and several dialogues end with speeches imagining the afterlife. Plato distinguished the apparent world, which constantly changes,

from an unchanging world of forms hiding behind the apparent world. This is the basis of Plato's *Theory of Forms* (or *Theory of Ideas*), which adheres to the denial of the reality of the material world, inverting the common conception of knowledge and reality. While most people take the objects of their senses to be real, and are *happy without the muses*, reality is in fact unavailable to those who only use their senses. This idea is captured in Plato's *allegory of the cave*, mentioned before, and more explicitly in the analogy of the *divided line*. The latter proposes the division of *opinion* from *knowledge*, and further subdivides opinion in *conjecture* and *beliefs*, while knowledge is further divided in *dianoia* (discursive thinking) and *noesis* (understanding). As we will soon show, the extent of abstract thought inherent to the Platonic world has presently been stretched to its breaking point, particularly in the *Copenhagen interpretation of Quantum Mechanics*, where discursive thought has produced a purely mathematical form that remains difficult to understand. As it seems, the forms we observe are in reality complex, coagulated structures emerging from great numbers of molecules that have very obscure properties on the smaller scale. We even do not know yet what precisely causes bodies to acquire *mass*, and only recently came to know about *charge* and *spin*. So far for abstract thought!

On the mystical side, both Plato and Pythagoras are strongly tinged with the lore of Orpheus. The Orphic tradition relates of the Genesis of the *World-Egg*, and of the relation of its Glorious Progeny to the *Æon*. In George Mead's view, "Orphicism" was a revival of the pre-Hesiodic "Orphism" of Onomacritus, and the original Orphism was a blend of Hellenic "*Bardic*" lore with "*Chaldaean*" elements. The creation tale of the Orphics and the Platonists is in large lines similar to that of the *Sacred Sermon of the Corpus Hermeticum*^{<21>}. This piece of text, central to our thesis, cast in more modern English, is as follows:

“Darkness that knew no bounds reigned low in the Abyss, together with Water and the subtle Breath of intelligence; these were by Power of God in Chaos. Then a Holy Light arose and elements were collected beneath Dry Space emerging from a Moist Essence. And all the Gods made separate things out of this secund Nature.

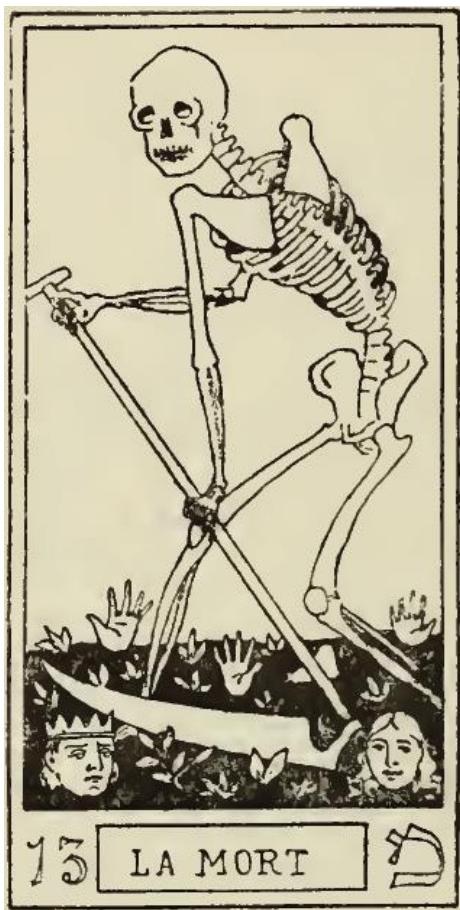
All things were yet undefined and unwrought, the light forms were collected above, and the heavy forms had their foundations laid down underneath the moist part of the Dry Space, the universal forms being bounded off by Fire and hanged in Breath to support them.

And Heaven was seen in seven circles; its Gods were visible in forms of stars with all their signs; while Nature had her members made articulate together with the Gods in her. And Heaven’s periphery revolved in cyclic course, borne on by Breath of God. ”

Finally, with respect to social organisation, Plato, quoting Socrates, claims that the enlightened man must be “utilised” in society for his lofty insights. He introduces the *Philosopher-King*, who accepts the power thrust upon him by the people who have the collective wisdom to choose a good ruler. This is a strong promulgation of genuine democracy, in which the appointed rulers work for the better of the common man, and for the better of other nations, such that the common man will have the prerequisites to choose its good rulers: the one serves the other.

After these prolegomena, we now enter into the more recent theorems of Gnosticism leading to Theosophy, which were to emerge from the Alchemical (Hermetic) sciences of Egypt, Persia, Greece and Rome into our own *Age of Enlightenment*.

Part II - Autumn



13

LA MORT

13

5. Tellus

Humanity has survived the nuclear age by some combination of skill, luck and divine intervention, and I suspect the latter in greatest proportion.

General Lee Butler

IN the beginning of September 2021, in Kingdom of Phrygia, nowadays known as the ‘Monaco of Turkey’, Prince Hamid sat stooped over a bunch of papyruses, which he had dug up from the Royal Treasury five years earlier. He had tried to study them on a number of occasions, but it had posed major obstacles since the documents were written in a rare variety of Paleo-Phrygian, a language that was extinct in his country for well over two millennia. The papers had circled various universities and an *ad hoc* group of linguists and historians had at long last found consensus on their contents. Now the original papyruses had been returned to the royal family, together with a translation in modern English, as well as in Turkish, the official languages of the kingdom. The international team of researchers had delivered a separate final report, and the translated text lay in the hands of Hamid in the form of a hardcover book with leather cover, adorned with the emblems of the kingdom. Due to the demand of confidentiality there was also an astronomical bill, in Euros.

Hamid had been first reading the introductory report and then embarked with growing interest on the translated stanzas of the *Oracles of Montanus*. Slowly his mind turned into awe, but then almost into dread. Evidently, Montanus was not a Christian prophet, as he was formerly depicted, but a priest of Cybele, who employed two witches, Maximilla and Priscilla, as his source, the *Sibyls*. Only he, Montanus, was able to receive, interpret and write down the hysterical utterings of these women, who spoke in a language that was even older Phrygian and very close to the language used in the temple of the ancient goddess Cybele. The royal family had never been very eager to know precisely what these prophesies actually comprised, for their members

had been too secular, and considered them as obsolete remnants of antiquity. This all changed when Hamid was pressed to read the age-old papers by a woman who claimed to have been personally advised by Uriel, the Archangel. After five years her words still echoed in his mind. Hamid had, on the spot, decided to abdicate, since his kingdom was in danger of destabilisation. He then had handed over the rule of the realm to his brother, who was less compromised and of moderate outlook. At that time, the Kingdom had become part of the EU together with Turkey and socio-economic prospects were rising steadily. However, at this point in time, superstition still had some grip over nations in the Middle East, and Hamid kept returning from one of the old papyruses to the translated text in modern English, reading for the third time the last lines of the third stanza:

[III: 12:45-57]

45 - *Hungry for power and riches, all [that is] sweet and noble in men will be corrupted. Everything will be turned into coinage, even the Spirit, but the Spirit will not yield, and He will retreat from [corrupted] Mankind.*

46 - *The Spirit visits those who know him, and he fills their life with beauty and determination. He visits those who seek for him [in their hearts] and labour for the truth at their own peril.*

47 - *All proclaimers of truth who do so for [acquiring] wealth proclaim falsehood. But all those who labour for truth with their neighbour in alliance will finally share in the fruits of the truth.*

48 - *There is only one truth: the Truth of God. However, men never know His truth while in Earthly [material] existence.*

49 - *Long will Apollo's laurel leaves be robbed from mankind, and Men will not distinguish false from true [prophecy], because Lucifer acts in God's disguise in the World.*

50 - *Lucifer will whisper that God is to be feared, that He is the destroyer of Kings and Kingdoms, the final judge who sends Men to the Abyss [the underworld].*

51 - Men will erect institutions in his unholy name, which bind Men in fear, dependency and slavery upon his unholy image.

52 - An all-seeing eye he has, but he sees only their comings and goings, not their hearts.

53 - Then Lucifer will [even] distort the sacred scriptures of Men, thus Kingdoms will proclaim war on each other each in name of their own [scriptures of] God.

54 - Finally, will follow the era of the Great Whore, alike that of Queen Jezebel of Sidon, and to the wine of her whoredom shall all Nations submit. Thus, the Merchants of the Earth enrich themselves with Her power and the Kings of the Earth will be drunk with her whoredom.

55 - However, she will be exposed, and let this be the sign: she will have many secrets, she will betray her own laws, and she will judge Men on false evidence. She will kill the Martyrs that [are there to] expose her.

56 - The Truthful will rise in great numbers, and She will despair.

57 - Prostrate She shall groan, when, deep in tears, She seeks along her banks the vanished shrine of Delphi.

58 - Anxious to have it rebuilt for Her own purposes, Typhon [Pytho] will reclaim His inheritance into the Omphalos [Navel of the World] and She will be exposed.

There the fragment ended, but Hamid knew what it meant: “*DELPHI!!*” he exclaimed, slamming his fist on the writing desk. He locked the precious report and hardcover book in his desk, and set out to the Al-Jiddi hospital in the town centre.

He had persevered to visit his victim, Benjamin Miller, who had been hospitalised there 5 years ago. On one fateful day, Benji had visited him concerning the resurrection of Delphi in the company of a former convict called Richard MacGregor, and at the end of the visit they had a short glimpse in the royal treasury. He had allowed Benji to become hypnotized by the two lions that make up the arm rests of the throne of Midas and he had left him for a while on that spot. Shortly

after seeing his other guest out of the palace he had returned to the treasury to have a firm word about a weapons transaction, which had compromised the royal family in a major way. However, he found Benji in a serious state of catalepsy. This outcome was entirely unintentional, because he had earlier lured some of his other acquaintances into the same trap and they had never shown any permanent afflictions. Benji, however, had only partially recovered during these five years. The physicians were a bit at odds how to treat their patient, and so Hamid had resolved to visit him regularly, and very recently Benji had started to respond positively to his attentions, although it was not more than a faint smile. After seeing Benji into hospital, 5 years ago, he had cursed that golden throne, and he had it delivered to Delphi, where it would act as the seat of the interpreter of the Pythia. The other members of the royal house were equally eager to have it disposed of, if it could do so much harm. He had insured it only at the cost of the gold, and after the throne had disappeared with all the other treasures at Delphi he was reimbursed by the insurance company without much ado. It was a formidable sum, and he had used part of it to support the Al-Jiddi institutions, which were run by a renowned Jewish family. Presently, it appeared that the remains of the insurance funds were just sufficient to cover the expenses that the various universities had claimed for the final translation of the scrolls of Montanus.

He decided to visit the sanatorium first, and he arrived there at noon. All places in the Kingdom of Phrygia were practically at walking distance. He went through the gate, and quickly paced through the extensive garden, which was one of the most brilliant in the whole of the re-emerging EU. Presently, he didn't consider sitting down, but he marched straight on to the ward. Upon entering the room, he found his English patient still unconscious. He whispered: "Hello Benji, it's me, Hamid. I hope you hear me and that everything is well. May God be with you in your deprived state."

He sat down for a quarter of an hour. Benji gave no signs of life other than heavy snoring.

Then, a voice behind him said: "My dear Hamid, again you are here, untiringly." It was doctor Eddowes, a shrink from the UK, who had worked in the psychiatry wing of Al-Jiddi for more than ten years, and who had been one of Hamid's study friends in Oxford.

Hamid turned around. "Of course! Anything new I should know about?"

"Maybe; one of our new colleagues has presented a theory about his state. He is sleeping, and having forceful dreams. They took his EEG a few times. Sometimes kicks around even."

"Really? But... is that not a good sign? Maybe he will wake up sometime, yes?"

"Difficult to say. Maybe. Physically he is, even for his age, in fair condition."

"Let's go for a walk, Jim. I have something to ask. It relates back to the college years."

"Fine, but I have a few checks on the neighbouring ward. What if you wait for me outside for a while?"

"Sure. I'll be at the fountain," Hamid nodded.

"See you there in a minute."

Hamid had strolled out of the complex and placed himself on one of the many benches around the fountain in the centre of the garden. This part was adorned with extensive rose-bushes. It was a hot afternoon and he lingered safely in the shadow, watching the various guests, physicians and patients alike, who strolled about at lunch time. Some enjoyed their lunch and some even took a mid-day nap on the lawn. Oriel College returned to his memory. There he had built his circle, and some of its members had even become quite celebrated. Some had deceased, some fallen ill, and with some he had lost contact, but James Eddowes had always been around. Although Hamid's study subject was natural history and science, he was fairly frequently involved in the discussions at the college about the relation between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Mohammedans. This was all further

weighed out in the frame of the Oxford Movement, or what had grown out of it at Oriel College.

An important advocate had been the Reverend Phillip Chance, a member of the group, who first studied acoustics but had then enrolled in the seminary. In the end he even became the Dean of Bristol, so he had heard. His unconventional opinions about religion, the *Stance of Chance* as they had called it, was suddenly on his mind. Chance had always defended the Orthodoxy, but he always called it the '*Orthodoxy that was lost*'. Hamid now realized that he found Phil's standpoint back in the papers of Montanus, namely the gift of prophesy, which was God's gift to Mankind. However, the Orthodox Church had placed all prophesy under a stringent ban, and the same was maintained of divination in general. After the enlightenment, and now in the modern age, all attempts to prophesy were frowned at.

Jim soon joined Hamid on the bench.

"Well," he sighed, "it's a fine day. Should be on holiday already, but I couldn't tear myself away from some important cases."

"That is understandable," said Hamid.

"What did you have on your mind?" Jim asked, somewhat edgily.

"Do you remember the Oxford days, what Phil said about prophesies?"

"Phillip Chance? Not very much, but he certainly took it all very seriously."

"Indeed, '*Why aren't we any longer entitled to prophesies?*' he always said."

"He took the inner stirrings of people quite serious, whatever muddled."

"Didn't he cite Aristotle's '*On Prophesying by Dreams*' and reversed his arguments?"

"Sorry, you have to fill me there."

"I just recollected his words more or less in the sense of: '*When a person prays or asks God for council, he always will be answered. However, the way God gives his council is not generally understood, particularly by us grown-ups. But small children understand much better. They are still close to that spiritual world*

they recently left, and recognise His Language. We are entangled in this world and have sunken, and do not understand any longer His Master's Voice.' ”

“You have a formidable memory, Hamid! Sure, I grasped his main idea. Much of it has been discussed by Carl Jung anyway. Have you finally read his Red Book?”

“Yes, but I didn't get to the end. No literature for me, thanks. No, I have now been occupied with the scrolls of Montanus.”

“Ah... you got the translation, finally?”

“Yeah, and it is a bit disturbing.”

“Gog and Magog stirring in the East?” Jim mumbled in a low voice, with a cynical grin.

“No, not with a word... rather something about Jezebel.”

“Ah, the great whore of the Apocalypse!”

“Indeed. Don't you think that the World is quite at peace nowadays?”

“Relatively peaceful, sure. The EU Commission boasts of it all the time! *'See what we have finally achieved!'* they shout from their ivory towers.”

“So does Sanders, but neither the USA, nor the EU had anything to do with it! Even the role of the United Nations was minor.”

“That's what everybody knows... unspoken... So, what's your question?” It seems Jim was indeed somewhat pressed for time.

“I would like to meet Phil again. Do you think he would still recognise me?”

“Phillip Chance, you mean? You haven't heard?”

“Heard what?”

“He's dead and gone, already for many years. A bomb attack in his church. Never heard of the Bristol Cathedral bombing?”

“No, how's that possible? When did that happen?”

“Back in 2012 in the autumn.”

“Nine years ago? And you didn't tell me?”

“Well, we had not so much contact with him after the college years. I must have forgotten. Besides, you were undercover in Baghdad.”

“Terrible time!” Hamid grumbled.

“Well, at least the peace negotiations in Syria were a great success!”

“Sure, but don’t ask me what all came over the table... and on my head... *under* the table. Indeed it was like Gog descending from Magog with his Fire from Hell.”

“The air strike in Baghdad, you mean? George Bush had other ideas about those mythical figures.”

“Well, that’s how it felt at the time. Still Bush could have unwittingly been on the right track,” Hamid remarked. “What a pity about Phil... there goes my inquiry. I think Phillip might have been interested in these papers. They are, in fact, the documents he had always been looking for.”

“You mean the original Sibylline Oracles?”

“Indeed, and quite different from their redress.”

“Well, I’m through with this subject. I thought you were too.”

“Maybe some clarifications I still would like to get,” said Hamid.

“Don’t dwell on such matters. All will be revealed in the end. It is all sheer impatience!”

“True! However... I’m mainly concerned about the survivors.”

Then Jim rose and walked away, saying. “Keep me informed!”

“Another question, before you leave,” Hamid urged. “Have you heard anything from Kenneth Tielock?”

“No, why do you ask?” said Jim, turning back a little.

“I visited him in 2016 in connection with the Delphi project, but I forgot all about him, and he seems to have forgotten all about me too; that’s a rather curious circumstance.”

“Well, we all slightly avoided him in the College years. He was in an ongoing quarrel with Phillip, as I remember. So, you mean to say he was somehow involved in the Delphi restoration project?”

“Yes, he was. I think I will have to delve further into his role.”

“Hmm... well... as I said: keep me informed!” Jim beamed and he turned around again, briskly pacing back to the hospital buildings.

~

Later in the month, my father, Jeremy Willmore, had enjoyed breakfast at ‘*the Cairns*’, and when he and his father were customarily washing the dishes, grandpa must have asked: “Well, Jerry, have you given it any thought?” It was, of course, about the schooner *Emily*.

“A rather big project, Dad, and we aren’t really sailors, if I may say so,” Jeremy muttered.

“It would be a good alternation with all this formula-mongering,” said Michael.

“Sure, at least Claire is all enthusiastic about it. She is now cleaning up the house in Bristol, ready to get moving. Really, I can’t do this all alone.”

“Of course not! The schooner restoration will take at least three persons. Gerald will help too.”

“And where will this operation take place? Who is going to pay for it?” Jeremy asked peevishly.

“Of course, WE are!”

“Quite obliged, but I find the responsibility a bit pressing with all this moving and then this whole project falling on top. I’m also still not sure who’s going to take care of John and Mary.”

“Don’t bother. We’ll sort something out for your children. The schooner has been very long in the family, and I would like to keep her there.”

“Is there still not anything known about when and where she was built?”

“No, Moray said it looks like one those German pilot schooners, but guesses an older variety.”

“And it featured in the *Onedin Line*?”

“Yeah, more than once.”

“So, you were able to lure mom into marriage, eh?” Jeremy chuckled.

“Well, on the decisive moment you have to be resourceful,” Michael mumbled.

“Great, well, what will be the first step?”

“Visit Moray, in Ayr, he runs the Griffin docks. You should be able to find a spot there. I’ll give you his phone number.”

“And then?”

“We should get the Emily in the water in Bristol, and then sail it to Ayr.”

“Can she sail at all, with that weak mast?”

“The main mast is weak, sure, but you can get here fairly well with the foremast sails only. I think we should change to the Bermuda rigging. Safer nowadays.”

“We’ll need all the help we can get.”

“I’ll ring Gerald again. He knows her latest condition. I have spoken to him earlier this week about the matter.”

Jeremy hummed again and gave a quick nod.

“So, what about Strathclyde?” asked Michael.

“No formal answer yet, but I think I have my foot already firmly in the door.”

“So, if you are looking for a house, Glasgow is expensive!”

“Paisley maybe, where Uncle Jim lives.”

“Nice town, in the summer we had coffee there.”

“You didn’t visit Uncle Jim?”

“No, we were on our way to Strathlachlan.”

“Ah, it was the Bearden Prize, wasn’t it?”

“Yes, quite an event. We didn’t have the time to visit Sheila’s brother. But back to our project: you might consider living on the schooner when she’s refurbished. Hardly any costs there.”

“Well, that’s worth considering! At least Claire and the kids will love the idea!”

~

Suddenly the doorbell rang, and Sandy barked restlessly. There were evidently some strangers at the front door. Sheila descended the stairs, and opened. At first she looked somewhat apprehensive, but then she recognised at least one person of the couple standing there.

“Well, well! Your Majesty! Long-time no see!” she said.

“Sorry for the unexpected drop-in,” Hamid said. “There are some matters to discuss. I hope you don’t mind.”

“Hmm... And you brought your new wife too!”

Hamid stepped inside and introduced Dinah. With charcoal black hair she was of exceptional beauty, effusing a frail oriental perfume.

“How on earth did you find us?” Sheila asked.

“Well,” said Hamid. “We visited Richard MacGregor first, you see, to get some clarifications about certain matters, but he advised me to go and visit you both. He said you might know more about them, and, as he pointed out, you seem to have all the relevant papers.”

Sheila beckoned her guests further inside, and kept Sandy away. The dog was always overenthusiastic on such occasions. Dinah, however, stepped forward slowly towards the dog, and held out her hand, and Sandy gave a casual lick.

“Nice, a border collie!” she said.

“Those are the ones you see in Scotland, Dinah,” said Hamid.

Jeremy and Michael had now appeared out of the large drawing room and shook hands with their unanticipated guests. Jeremy soon excused himself, and said he will ‘transcend’ upstairs. Michael showed the guests into the drawing room, and asked if they would like coffee.

“Coffee for me and tee for Dinah, please. Maybe you have Darjeeling?” Hamid asked.

“I think we can find that,” said Sheila, and she marched off to the kitchen.

“Awfully sorry for the disturbance,” said Hamid. “I’ll come to the point straight away.”

“That’s OK,” said Michael. “Take your time... We are in no hurry. How have you been?”

“Fine, fine,” said Hamid. “Something remained nagging though, and now I have something that might interest you,” he enthused.

“Oh?” Michael whimpered. “You’ve got all my attention!”

“MacGregor told me you knew Maria Ferraris quite well.”

“She’s a niece of my wife, yes, or rather, *was*. You saw us together in Greece, didn’t you?”

“Indeed, on that funny evening in the bar... and Richard also told me you knew Phillip Chance.”

“Yes.”

“How well did you know him?”

“He was our pastor in the beginning, but later he became a good friend when we lived in Bristol. He was a very trusted person. We always consulted him in difficult personal matters,” said Michael. “Did you know him too?”

“Hmm, Hmm, he was one of my fellow students during the Oxford years,” Hamid hummed. “I suppose we should talk a bit more about him later, but first things first!” He produced from his rucksack a lush leather hardback.

“I think you will be interested in this.”

“And... what is this?” asked Michael, weighing the heavy volume in his hands.

“Ever heard of the *Phrygian Heresy*?” Hamid asked.

Michael shook his head and said: “Can’t say I have.”

“They are the original papers of Montanus, our local prophet from the second century. I had them recently translated at considerable cost.”

“Ah, the Montanists were mentioned by Phillip Chance once or twice, the *New Prophecy*... Was it not?”

“Indeed, according to this consensus report these are, indeed, the original prophesies of Montanus. Interestingly, they were initially favourably received by Rome, because they agreed in great lines with the epistles of the Apostle John. They were thus called the *New Prophecy*. Unfortunately, they were gradually viewed as doubtful by the later Popes, and then they started to divide the Christian communities, mainly because they reached back a considerable time, to the *Books of the Sibyl*.”

“So, these are the lost Sibylline Oracles?” asked Michael.

“Yes, the Orthodox Roman Church eventually condemned them as a heresy, known as the *Phrygian Heresy*. It had the effect that, in the end, the general art of prophesy was denounced by the church altogether. This standpoint was rather illogical, because some prophesies had been fairly well fulfilled in the earlier times of Christianity and - in fact - form a firm basis of the Judeo-Christian Bible.”

“So, what about these texts?” said Michael, weighing the tome in his hands with a slight unease.

“Part of these prophesies were earlier known as the *Sibylline Books*, but these had been destroyed already before the Christian era, due to intended or unintended library fires. But the Roman emperor Augustus was much dismayed and ordered a reconstruction of the lost prophesies of the Sibyls. Jews, Christians and Greeks all participated in the huge task of reproducing the Sibylline Books in the first century, writings which are nowadays known as the *Sibylline Oracles*. I have made myself well-acquainted with those in my study time in Oxford, and again recently, but now it seems that the scrolls of Montanus are a more accurate source than these later reconstructions.”

“Oh, I see! ... And you want me to read them?”

“Indeed!”

“Why?” asked Michael.

“As I’ve understood from Richard MacGregor,” Hamid said in a lower voice, “you are something of a key person in these matters. You see, these papers have been locked away for a long time, which was very unfortunate. It was Maria Ferraris who urged me to unlock them.”

“Maria?!” Michael exclaimed. “Five years ago?”

“Sorry, but it has taken considerable time to get them translated... I just got them last week.”

“But, how...” Michael started.

“You were present in Delphi when she disappeared, weren’t you?”

“Yes, she disappeared... with all the rest!”

“Sorry to say I had no patience to go with you. There were too many disturbing problems at home. Anyway, did you ever wonder why only *she* disappeared, and your whole party was saved?”

“We only have a faint idea.”

“Please read these writings through. Is it convenient?”

“Sure. I have all the time in the world! I’m a pensioner!” Michael smiled.

Sheila came in with coffee and tea. The cups and the rest of the dishes clattered a little on the tray. She had heard only fragments of the conversation, and had concluded that something important was on.

“This concerns Maria?” she asked.

“Indeed Ma’am.” said Hamid. “Sorry to fall into your house like this and directly spout my subject matter all over the premises.”

“That’s all right,” said Sheila.

“Maybe I take the opportunity to explain fully why I’m here.” Then he entered on a summarised account, for a small part known to Sheila and Michael. It appeared that after Benjamin Miller and Richard MacGregor had drawn him into the Delphi affair, out of quite legitimate motivations, he had later on got involved in it via a more dubious party.

“The matter of fact is that some influential people were a bit surprised by the sudden donation of key artefacts that your group had collected, and they were much more essential to the functioning of the oracle than those which were provided by *them*. The main question that kept cropping up was how *you* all got involved in this and even have been able to recruit a genuine Pythia.”

“All of this remained very shady to us... Uhm... Your Majesty...” Sheila said.

“Hamid, please. I wouldn’t like to bother you with spelling out my full surname, and I try to keep aloof of matters of the royal house of Al-Yassin as much as I can. Besides I’m a mere Prince nowadays, living his life out of the limelight.”

“Ok, Hamid,” said Sheila. “It is all related to a family affair, that of my father and his brother. To cut it all short, the initial reason for us to become involved in Delphi was because of the doings of a secret brotherhood, called the *Order of the Purple Rose*. This was a Rosicrucian society of which the headquarters was based for a long time on the island of Madeira, in the house of Maria Ferraris near Funchal to be more precise. It was my father who discovered the hidden premises, and he did his best to keep the treasures hidden there safe. We recovered these crucial items, and they were needed to revive the oracle of Delphi when the time was right. We returned a few other important items to Damascus. We more or less acted on the information we got, bit by bit, out of the remaining papers of my father. In the end, however, the reason for our participation changed abruptly.”

“And why was that?” asked Hamid.

“Because of Pytho. He was suddenly brought to light,” said Sheila.

“Pytho? The antagonist of Apollo, you mean?”

“Indeed.”

“Brought to light? How did *that* happen?” Hamid inquired.

“Through some chemistry,” Michael interposed, “I’m known for my reckless experiments.”

“Michael did it unwittingly,” said Sheila. “However, Pytho had to be subdued. That was the main reason why we set out for Delphi.”

“Wait a minute now, before my head starts to spin,” said Hamid. He took a sip of his coffee, and Dinah was staring at him with a little concern, not knowing quite what to say. “You mean that the shrine of Delphi was needed to get rid of Pytho? *Again?*!”

“Yes. And we were evidently quite successful. Maria completed her mission very well,” said Michael. “However, we were forced to keep this a bit of a secret.”

“She had seen Uriel,” Hamid muttered. “At first I didn’t believe her, but her piercing eyes convinced me.”

“She spoke to you about Uriel, the Archangel?” asked Sheila.

“At breakfast, shortly before I left,” said Hamid. “Then I decided to withdraw and settle my affairs. I got married, straight away!”

“My belated congratulations!” said Michael.

“But the emergence of Pytho throws an entirely new light on this prophesy! We must talk more,” said Hamid. “Would you mind if we put our camper for a while on your grounds? You seem to have lots of space here.”

“Oh, you are touring?” asked Sheila.

“Well, we decided to keep a bit of a second honeymoon,” said Hamid.

“Good idea!” Sheila enthused. “I’ll show you a nice spot.”

“If you like, I can give you some background literature related to our mystery,” said Michael. He went to the bookshelf and took a few papers from a lower shelf.

“Before we go I should read to you a key passage in the thesis of my father-in-law, which I’ve marked here”, said Michael. “It reads as follows: *We call in our anxiety upon Themis, to show what art it is that repairs our sunk affairs, because she was naturally vouchsafed to do so. Therefore, it would almost need a reconstruction of the ancient Oracle of Delphi and a newly anointed Pythia to resolve our fate in these unruly times, an endeavour that is nowadays quite unattainable, due to the great depth of our sunken state.*’ You understand the purport of this statement?”

“Indeed!” Hamid laughed. “It seems he was a fatalist, and history has proven him wrong!”

~

After finishing coffee and tea, they all went out to see the camper and find a place for it near the riverbank. The camper was quite extravagant, and evidently Hamid and Dinah were dedicated television slaves. All kinds of DVD’s were placed side by side in a small bookshelf, mostly BBC series from the late 1980’s. After introducing their guests to the renewed swimming pontoon and the river Ayr, Michael and Sheila joined them inside the camper for a night cap. It was almost three in the morning when they decided to get some rest.

It proved a tiresome task for Sheila and Michael to make sense of Hamid's new information, and the former ruler of Phrygia had clearly the same problem with the literature Michael had provided. John's thesis he referred to as '*A prayer without end, having neither head nor tail, but very edifying reading all the same*'. However, it was clear to Michael and Sheila that more pieces of the puzzle were starting to emerge and, hopefully, fall in place. On one evening, when the autumn storms were raging outside the comfy camper, Hamid recounted his years in Oxford and the discussion focussed on Philip Chance.

"From 1988 to 1992 I was sent out to study in Oxford, as our customs prescribe, and I had to do this on limited means and incognito. The latter appeared to be easy, because our little Kingdom and its royal house were still fairly unknown, but the former activity was less pleasant. I needed to work in various summer jobs: one summer I found employment in a biochemical plant and on another summer I was dispatched as a general stage assistant in a number of ITV productions. You may remember the chief-inspector Morse and inspector Dalgliesh series?"

"Yes, as a matter of fact we recently got through the entire Inspector Morse series. At the time we had no TV and were much too busy."

"I can imagine!" laughed Hamid. "Did you also see *The Silent World of Nicholas Quinn*?"

"Was that not the episode about an Oxford foreign examinations syndicate that ran school exams in the Middle East?"

"Yes, I shortly figured in the beginning of that episode as a Sheikh. For the rest I took care of the equipment, the lighting, and many other trivial things, but it was much nicer than the first job at this chemical plant."

"So, you worked in the chemical industry too?" asked Michael.

"Not in the production of those so-called *biopolymers* they made, mostly in the back office under a director who was boasting all the time of his connections in high places. He was a Freemason, you see, and we

in the Middle East just don't approve of such people. Anyway, he got shown his place in the end."

"Oh, in what way?" Sheila chuckled.

"Well, we of the Royal House of Al-Yassin used to be Muslims, but over time we were inclined to become atheists. In the end we gave up - atheists have a troublesome life, you see. We knew Pope John Paul II, because he had been visiting us a few times in Gordianum trying to convert us, and since he had his subtle charms, we were thinking gradually to embrace the Roman Catholic faith. So, I told my boss, Alex he was called, that I also knew a lot of famous people, even the Pope. Of course he didn't in the least believe me."

"Just a moment," Sheila interjected, "You refer to Alex Sands, the director of Uromed?"

"Indeed! How did you guess?"

"I have been working at the Glasgow branch under him for a short time. Must have been in 1989 when Alex moved to the Oxford plant."

"Oh, I see. What a small world! But as I was saying: for some time I had made up my mind about the Christian faith and Phil Chance provided an exquisite opportunity to see Pope John, who would be visiting Oriel College on some official business. Thus, a splendid opportunity presented itself to teach my boss a little lesson. As it was all a bit hushed up, I invited Alex to come and join the proceedings at the college. Nobody really expected it, but after my entering the Roman Church, Pope John decided to show himself on the balcony and give a small speech to all the invited people at Oriel College, and I was standing beside him on the balcony. The Pope was discreet: he managed to keep my identity secret. However, from that lofty position I saw Alex suddenly faint. Flat out he went, square on the green."

"Gosh, poor Alex," Sheila laughed.

"Of course, I was worried that he might have got a heart-attack and I ran over to see him; guess what had happened? One of my fellow students was not at all acquainted with Pope John Paul, for some odd reason. As he happened to be standing beside my boss listening to the

speech, he suddenly asked: ‘*Who is that bishop besides Hamid?*’ At that point it all became a little bit too much for him.”

“A bit more than you had bargained for!” laughed Michael.

“Oh, Hamid,” Dinah shyly protested, “can you never stop telling that senseless anecdote. It’s really annoying!”

“Don’t complain, Dinah. As Phil Chance always said: ‘*The more you complain, the longer God lets you live*’. I never in my life have had reasons for complaints and neither should you, despite all the disaster you’ve seen. Actually, in this context the anecdote is quite instructive for my line of inquiry.”

“Strange that Phil never spoke of you,” said Michael.

“I asked him explicitly never to mention me to anyone, since I had to be incognito. So it seems he kept his promise. The thing is: Phillip Chance was quite an inspiring chap in our little group. Ever heard of the Oxford Movement?”

“Yes, he mentioned it and frequently referred to Cardinal Newman, who was all for turning the clock back to the earlier Roman Catholic Church, or at least to some degree.”

“Quite so, the *ninety degrees* to be more specific,” said Hamid, “and naturally John Paul could not have any objections to the Church of England doing some steps back towards Roman Catholicism, but if Muslims and atheists could be converted to his dominion, things would be even greater in his advantage. Phil always spoke about dreams and their significance; as you know, equally to Cardinal Newman.”

“Yes, I’ve been scrutinizing Elgar’s musical adaptation of the *Dream of Gerontius* just this summer,” said Michael.

“So, then,” Hamid continued, “you must appreciate that this writing is of some importance, also from the perspective of scientific enquiry. Phil was convinced that Cardinal Newman had seen highly inspired dreams with strong bearing to the tenets of the Enlightenment, trying to transform these for modern times.”

“As I recall, Phil always stressed the importance of dreams, posing the hypothesis that dreams are a commixture of a man’s real experience

with a spiritual supervisory component, and that one should never dismiss dreams too lightly,” Michael added.

“Particularly I want to confirm here,” said Hamid, “that Phil was always wondering why our times are so critical towards anything that is related to dreams, prophesies, visions, and other metaphysical phenomena of that kind, not to speak of paranormal phenomena and occultism. As I understood at the time, his thesis was indeed - as you imply - that dreams are a link between the numinous spiritual domain and the objective, rational domain of the Mind, and are the main activity of the soul, the soul being the derived property of the mind and the spirit, as it reads all over in your father-in-law’s thesis. He even proposes a rough anomaly with String Theory. Now when it comes to prophesy, I was always inclined to disagree with Phillip. We at least agreed that *vague* prophesies should not be taken into consideration. I mentioned to him that there are only two types of prophesy to which I can adhere, even to the present day: *self-evident* prophesies and *self-fulfilling* prophesies. Those of the Messiah, I always argued, had been clearly of the self-fulfilling type. Phil didn’t like that idea much, but he had to admit I had a point.”

“Well, at least from the outset, but certainly not as it transpired in the end,” said Michael.

“Point taken! However, the degree to which your past experience in Delphi has matched the prophesies of Montanus, particularly concerning the demise of Jezebel, well, that is far from self-evident. This is a historic link we should investigate further. There must be more behind this.”

“Have you at all gleaned any ideas from the writings of my father, besides that it is haphazard and amusing?” asked Sheila.

“His diary and thesis are surely interesting, and as a member of the Purple Rose he certainly learned how to write purple prose!” Hamid laughed. “He is always in a strange way beside the point, but is capable of hiding it very well in a constant surge of rhetoric!”

“Although the idea of fractal wave equations is tempting, I don’t think Schrödinger’s wave functions can be subjected to a series expansion like that,” Dinah commented.

“Dinah has a higher degree in theoretical physics, you see,” Hamid explained, patting Dinah on her head.

“How on earth he got so interested in David Bohm, I wonder?” asked Hamid.

“Oh, I gave him a copy of the book *Wholeness and the implicate order*. As always he got again overexcited about it.”

“Anyway, when reading the thesis I was left with the ominous feeling that your father must have been imprisoned somewhere.”

“Really? And what gave you that idea?” asked Sheila.

“His reference to various places and literature sources. On various points he refers to famous men, writing in prison, like Bach and Bunyan. Also the thesis is clearly the work of a man without much connection to the outside world. The most interesting hint is the location of the monastery: Maleme on Crete...”

“No monastery there,” said Michael.

“No, but there is a monastery *near* Maleme. Maybe somebody kept a watching eye over his writings, and he had to disguise his predicament and his intentions. It could have been the Gonia Odigitria monastery.”

“Why do you think so?”

“I know the place,” said Hamid, “It was abandoned for some time, and then fell into private hands. It was owned by a person who had vested interests in Delphi.”

“And who’s that?” asked Michael.

“A billionaire with the name of Kenneth Tielock, a leading collector of ancient art. I visited him in 2016 concerning the Delphi project.”

“Tielock! A conspicuous name! You knew him well?” asked Michael.

“He was, in fact, an old study mate. Back in the eighties he was also part of our little group at Oriel College. He was interested in Ancient Art and studied there on that subject. Nowadays he lives a secluded life

in a remote spot, namely the same monastery near Maleme. I only visited him once, and it was a very short visit. Our Greek ambassador knew him, and he made me aware of Kenny's plans to resurrect the Oracle of Delphi. When I visited him, he apparently knew nothing of your party, and was highly interested in your contributions to the project. I showed him the pictures that Benji Miller and Richard McGregor had given me. He more or less commanded me to join you all... to see what you were up to."

"He didn't volunteer to go and see for himself?"

"No, he said he had more pressing obligations. He was quite pertinent, and I didn't feel much for going against him."

"You, as the King of a foreign country?!"

"Gosh, I had the feeling that he could treat the American president as his butler. He had a reputation of having his way even back in the eighties in Oxford, but on *that* occasion, my goodness..."

"So, he sent you to spy on us?"

"Yes, but then I also got interested on my own account. To be honest, I was called in to the Delphi project at a time when I had only heard some rumours. I knew it was something hot that circulated in the spheres of opulent industrialists who were collectors of antiquities. To be honest, I was part of a small club of collectors myself. However, I couldn't guess that a hobby like that could go out of hand in such a way as to endeavour to reconstruct the whole site of Delphi almost from scratch. It must have cost a stupendous sum of money, and a huge persuasion effort to get all those precious loans and donations. Many affluent people lent their valuable collections to the site, people from all over the world."

"So the resurrection of Delphi was basically *his* idea?"

"Well, it was initially a Greek reconstruction plan. Kenny, however, saw it as an opportunity to augment it. He made it clear to me that returning the original treasures to Delphi would enable the full functional restoration of the oracle. He restated the thing he had said in Oxford to Phillip Chance and me, namely that it was '*such a shame that*

Apollo was still robbed of his laurel leaves'. In his opinion, the only part that was missing, the most important part, was the Pythia. He wanted to find out if you had already found her. I pointed out to him that you might be on to her. This was the most interesting item to him, the last missing piece."

"We tentatively proposed Maria as the Pythia, but found out on the very last moment that she actually fulfilled all the criteria," said Sheila.

"How odd," Hamid said. "Anyway, Kenny had swiftly shown me around on his premises. The monastery was fairly large, and I almost felt like Barry Lyndon entering Hackton Castle when I set eyes on the collection of armour, which '*might have been worn in the days of Gog and Magog*', to quote Thackeray. Absolutely the most incredible collection of Thracian, Cimmerian and Persian antiquities I have ever set eyes on. Plainly, some of them were recently acquired from dubious countries where recent conflicts had raged, such as Iraq and Syria. I decided to be not too inquisitive. It looked all very repugnant to me."

"Would he be part of that gang that had covertly plundered the ancient antiquities of the Middle East, some of whom are now in jail?" asked Michael.

"I had the strong feeling that Kenny held something back. I think now he could be involved."

"Maybe he is even the headman," said Sheila. "They always get away, you see."

"Difficult to say, but we should definitively find him. By the way: he knew Benjamin Miller, the police inspector. Kenny was quite surprised to hear about him being among your team. However, he didn't tell further how he knew him. And I didn't further inquire. At the time it was for me somewhat troubling, because earlier I was part of a peace committee to Syria, which had been successful in getting a permanent cease-fire, and at the time when the Delphi site was reconstructed, Syria was getting slowly disarmed and still tried to cope with its overcrowded refugee camps. I knew Benjamin Miller as an arms broker for BAE systems. Through him we acquired new fighter planes for our

Kingdom, and when inspector Miller suddenly turned up with these plans for Delphi, well, I was a bit surprised. Against my better judgement I decided to join your group, partly urged by Kenny and partly out of my own inquisitiveness. I had questions for the Pythia myself, you see.”

“We were all quite aware of that!” Sheila laughed.

“I was quite surprised to learn that she was a musician, not at all of any royalty, and then from Funchal on the Isle of Madeira and not at all from Delphi. It was strange then to learn that she knew things about me and about the affairs of the Royal House, even about the secret treasury, which nobody could know, when she produced these striking counsels with that ancient Chinese book!” Hamid fervently recalled.

“As we all witnessed!” Michael giggled.

“So, I decided to follow her advice. I saw her at breakfast, and then travelled straight back home without even setting sight on Delphi. I abdicated, put my brother on the throne, and married in all quietness my great love.” He nodded in Dinah’s direction. Her great beauty, however, was veiled, because she had, after a long day, fallen asleep on the couch of the camper.

“She didn’t get quite all she desired - such as the whole tiny Kingdom of Phrygia,” Hamid whispered, “but she was happy with me all the same.”

“You have now more time to spare together, I guess,” said Sheila.

“Yes, sure... but back to Delphi: soon after the wedding I heard the tragic news from Delphi that nearly the whole site with its ancient treasures had been swept into oblivion: all treasures had disappeared. To my estimate it contained a significant part of the world’s gold reserves and then all the newly restored buildings and the other antiquities. Well... I was in awe, how could such a thing happen? But the worst thing to me was that the Pythia had also disappeared with the treasures.”

“As we told you earlier, we couldn’t save Maria... unfortunately. At least I and Sheila knew she had this task with Pytho,” said Michael.

“It seems there is a small consensus among the scientists that the site must have been struck by dark matter or something, but have they ever consulted *you*, the main witnesses?” Hamid asked. Sheila and Michael shook their heads negatively.

“I called mister Ferraris soon after the event to ask what had happened to the Pythia. Initially, I couldn’t even remember her name, but Richard McGregor provided me with the name and address of her husband. Mister Ferraris could not tell me much about what happened. He said it was just an earthquake and a gush of wind,” Hamid explained.

“That is how we experienced it,” said Michael.

“So... what’s all the secrecy about? The whole site has been a restricted area for more than five years, guarded by the US military. Nobody can get in or out, as if it was a nuclear accident of some sort.”

“We haven’t been so interested to go back,” said Sheila.

“Hmm, and what is also strange: I never heard anything of Kenny after the event. I would expect that he would have contacted me, but he never did.”

“Well, to me the strangest fact is that the event was prophesized in no unclear terms by the Sibyls, and that Maria somehow knew of this,” said Michael.

“Yes, well... *that* finally set me in motion,” said Hamid. “Clearly there must be more to the whole event in Delphi than the eye meets.”

“Can you tell us about Maria still?” asked Michael. “You said she had seen the Archangel Uriel, in a vision. What did she literally say?”

“She said that *God is God regardless of what we think* and that even *Uriel in his lower position, is already quite beyond words*, and that *he had advised Montanus in critical times*. She reproached my ancestors that they had hidden the prophecies. This is as much as I can remember.” Hamid was silently brooding for a while. “This may sound absurd, and I say this as a troubled person, but it is almost as if the world at large was saved in some sort of divine intervention.”

“You, Hamid, a troubled person? You must be kidding!” said Sheila.

“You don’t know what I have experienced in the Middle East. The whole area was becoming increasingly unstable. During the meetings of the Arab League, which I attended many times, there was no unity to be found anywhere. Sitting there among those ‘*Rulers of the Universe*’, in their oil-financed golden chairs, I found myself siding for once with Muammar Gaddafi, who made the point that after Afghanistan and Iraq, many of us, seen as despots in the West, would be next. We were laughed out of the hall by the Saudis! But then the so-called Arab Spring started and Gaddafi was the first to be assassinated by the French-US coalition. When the civil war started in Syria, I realized the Middle East was about to become one big conflagration, much in agreement with the revelations made by US General Wesley Clark, who in no unclear words protested against the US government’s plans, right after 9/11, to change the regimes in seven countries in five years, including Syria and Iran, something that only could lead to chaos in the area. For some obscure reason, which I yet have to unravel, I was chosen to be part of the intergovernmental peace committee of the United Nations. We got the truce in Syria, and - by the way - I owe you the account of how I met Dinah, but that for a later time. Despite all we accomplished in Syria, Iran remained on the list of targets of the US government. Now, at the end of the Sanders administration, after having had a relatively peaceful period, these neo-conservatives are on the move again. Who is going to save us next time?”

“Maybe we will run out of luck, but do things really look so bad?” asked Sheila.

“They are worse than you think, but maybe I’m going a bit astray now. When I come to think of it, this *Purple Rose* is most intriguing,” Hamid continued. “Just the sort of thing Kenny was in for, always in a spell about finding the lost treasures of the Covenant, like the Arc and the Rosy Cross. Philip Chance warned him that this could become an unhealthy obsession and would bring him to ruin.”

“Are you implying that the Rosy Cross was some sort of covenant, comparable to the lost Arc?” asked Michael.

“Was that not the thing the whole Covenanter movement was about, the *Standard of Christ*? ”

“I wouldn’t take that so literally,” said Sheila.

“Let me explain!” said Hamid. “As the theosophists have put forward, there has been a whole body of arcane knowledge. But the Arc of the Covenant was only one of many covenants given to Mankind. The last one was the *Rose Cross of Sharon*. ”

“We all know about the Cross of Sharon,” said Sheila.

“Oh... So, then you know it was kept originally at the abbey of the Rose Cross in Damascus and it was lost for a long time?”

“Yes, we’ve been there,” said Sheila. “Didn’t we tell you?”

“Oh, so then you know also that it was returned some years ago. Suddenly, out of the blue, just when things started to settle down in Syria, some mysterious party returned the Cross to the monastery, and for five years it has been a veritable source of inspiration for many pilgrims to the place.”

“A small detail we forgot to tell you, sorry, but it was *our* party that returned the Cross of Sharon to Damascus, just before we got involved in Delphi,” said Michael.

“Oh... but... but... where did you find it?” asked Hamid.

“Among all the other treasures we found in Madeira... in Maria’s house. It had been in the keeping of the same secret brotherhood since the end of the Jacobite uprisings. The only thing we know from my father’s writings is that the Count of St. Germain intervened and organised the transfer of the golden cross to a less conspicuous location, the place where his brotherhood kept its regular meetings.”

“So, the Cross of Sharon was amongst all the other Delphi treasures... Well, that’s odd.”

“They were not all particularly from Delphi, as for instance your Golden Throne was, but they had been robbed by the same group of archaeologists, as they called themselves, that roamed the Middle East in search of valuable antiquities, like this modern gang. The only thing I’m pondering about is how James Tiloch, who must have been a high

member of the fraternity, got convinced by the well-doing Count. Another question is how he managed to get all that weighty and precious stuff safely shipped away from under the nose of his associates in Glasgow. I have the hypothesis he must have had help from a reliable shipping merchant or, arguably, a group of pirates,” Michael explained.

“And when did this shipping take place?” asked Hamid.

“Somewhere around the year 1742, maybe a few years later, as mentioned in John’s diary, but definitively before the Battle of Culloden.”

“But John’s diary mentions the Order of the Purple Rose as being instigated to revive the Garden of Eden.”

“John didn’t know anything of the ultimate purposes of the fraternity that opposed that club of kleptomaniacs after all their treasures had been taken, but that a hard core of individuals kept hunting for the treasures for as long as two and a half centuries should be as clear as a whistle. They are mainly descendants of clan Tillock, but also other people are involved in this, even quite common, unsuspecting people. At least Andy Tielock must have been with them, and his temporary girl-friend,” Michael further explained.

“Any idea if Kenneth Tielock is involved in that club?” asked Sheila.

“I don’t know, but he could well be, as Michael hinted earlier,” Hamid affirmed.

“It’s getting late,” said Sheila, “and tomorrow is going to be a heavy day of hull-scrubbing in the harbour. So, maybe we can continue our evening conversations tomorrow evening.”

“Can I be of any assistance?” Hamid asked.

“Please, join us! By all means!” said Michael.

“I’d rather not ask Dinah, but at least I’m all in for it.”

“Then I’ll see you in the morning at breakfast!” said Michael.

“You’ll have to rise at seven, and get your hands dirty,” Sheila said, and blinked an eye, rising with Michael from the couch.

"No problem for me, but Dinah always rises late, and her delicate hands I would like to spare," said Hamid.

"We'll try not to wake her," said Sheila.

The Persian beauty was still sleeping undisturbed, when Michael and Sheila silently left.

6. Mars

In rebuttal it will be said that there is no domestic equivalent to the Nazi regime of torture, concentration camps or other instruments of terror. But we should remember that for the most part, Nazi terror was not applied to the population generally; rather, the aim was to promote a certain type of shadowy fear - rumours of torture - that would aid in managing and manipulating the populace. Stated positively, the Nazis wanted a mobilized society eager to support endless warfare, expansion and sacrifice for the nation.

Sheldon Wolin

THE next day promised to be a genuine day of toil, and it was at this point that the present writer, then 10 years old, got more involved. My old-uncle Gerald had arrived from London at the harbour of Ayr already at seven in the morning after driving through the night with his old Fiat Ducato, which was filled to the brim with repair and painting gear. He met up with our family and his cousins Lizzy and my father Jeremy, who had already arrived at the Griffin docks the day before. Then, under the guidance of Moray Fergusson, the dockyard's overseer, the schooner Emily was lifted out of the water slowly into the repair dock. The sight of the huge crane and the big wooden vessel, hanging suspended in the air by three thin straps of nylon, was awe-inspiring for a little boy like me, and dad took some swift pictures with his mobile phone, sending them off instantly to his mother in Muirkirk.

Back in Muirkirk, Hamid had a quick breakfast with my grandparents, and there the pictures dad had taken were shown.

“Here’s the Emily, high an’ dry!” said Sheila.

“Oh boy! That’s a big one!” said Hamid. “I hope these cables are strong enough.”

“Let me see,” said Michael. He took over the phone from Sheila. “Moray knows what he’s doing,” he nodded. “He does it regularly in the beginning of the autumn.”

“Are there many boats in Ayr?” asked Hamid.

“No, the Griffin docks are fairly small and only have limited space. The largest building there is the Kingdom Hall of the Witnesses of Jehova, but we are safely on the opposite side. Anyway, boat repair activities have been increasing steadily, and they try to reclaim the premises of the Kingdom Hall,” Michael explained.

After a speedy breakfast, the party left at half past seven with the silent hydrogen-powered car in the direction of Ayr. Hamid whimsically referred to the vehicle as a *Persian flying carpet*. Dinah had promised to watch over ‘*The Cairns*’ for the day and prepare an *Oriental* dinner. She wasn’t as enthusiastic as Hamid about the unexpected turn their last day in Scotland took, but could use a free day alone. Sheila implored her to make herself at home as much as possible.

Back at the Griffin docks, great-uncle Gerald unloaded his collection of tools, largely steel scrapers and six sturdy heat guns, intended to remove the thick red and brown paint from the old schooner, which were from the days of the *Onedin Line*. He even built a small scaffold around the vessel in record time. He was a professional house painter and knew what he was doing, although it was the first time he embarked on refurbishing a large wooden boat. When the three helpers arrived from Muirkirk, work started instantly. Aunt Lizzy had come all the way from Bristol to help my uncle in need. She was short and plump in her overall, and started at the stern together with Hamid. Sheila and Michael started at the bow, and Gerald and Jeremy in the middle. My mother remained initially inside the schooner, but was forced to come out later, as the air was filled with the odour of half-burned paint. Since there was hardly any wind, the pace of work was somewhat impaired due to the obnoxious gasses. My sister Mary and I just watched all the work with awe, and were told to keep some distance from the vessel. However, till the present day the memories of that day remain vivid. After some swearing here and there when scorching their fingers, the ardent work by six pairs of hands proceeded fairly rapidly with the tools provided. Bit by bit the ugly paint was

removed and the original dark oak of the schooner exposed. The first surprise came when grandma managed to reveal the remnants of a painted inscription that proved to be the original name of the schooner: '**Ondine**'. Soon Michael found the same inscription on the other side. A little later, Prince Hamid uncovered at the stern the origin of the schooner: '**Amsterdam 1685**'. That was the moment for a coffee break. Moray Fergusson was the dark, beardy member of the family that had run the dockyard since the 1970's, and his office was untidy, having seen at times unruly folk. Still, he managed to produce some fine coffee and tea with sandwiches for his guests and lemonade for Mary and me.

"That must 'ave been a fine vessel when she was built," he remarked. "A bit at the end-time of the Dutch Golden Age. You should visit the maritime museum in Amsterdam, Mike! They just might 'ave some record there of a schooner *Ondine* built in 1685," he urged.

"That's what I was thinking!" said Michael.

"Funny," said Sheila, "another conspicuous link to the Onedin line!"

"Indeed, now we know where they took the hint from, when they painted over the whole vessel!"

They all laughed heartily.

"It must 'ave been one of those ships that sailed on the West Indies, when the competition with Imperial Great Britain was tight'ning," said Moray.

"As you see," said Hamid, "it sometimes pays off to undertake a task like this. You are a lucky guy, Jeremy, to get such a vessel all for free."

"Yeah, but I was a bit afraid that it would be infested with mould. Now, it seems the woodwork is in fine condition," my father said.

"Solid oak, the right paint," said Moray. "That's kept 'er in fine condition; only the main mast 'as to be replaced. That's a daunting task!"

A quarter of an hour went by, and the club returned to work. After the second break, they found a large group of bystanders inspecting the schooner. "Git out 'o there, yee Mormons!" Moray shouted. Insulted

by the gross misclassification of their denomination, they turned back to their Kingdom Hall, one even holding up his middle finger.

Slowly approaching the end of their task for the day, having stripped nearly all the paint, the best news was surely the quality of the wood: it was still quite intact on all sides, so that new oak didn't need to be patched in. That was a great relief, but the weather was suddenly not on our side. The first autumn storms and rains were underway, and after the stripping operation a few days break would be needed. In this way our family lived for a few weeks on board the schooner, just to get acquainted, but we also assisted with the lighter tasks related to modernizing the spacious interior. Uncle Gerald had already made some plans for it, mostly construction with dark veneered plywood panels. This was surely a great time for a small boy like me, but I remember my sister found it all highly uncomfortable. In the end we all stayed there until next spring.

At the end of the day, Michael, Sheila and Hamid flew back to Muirkirk with the *Persian carpet*. According to Hamid's reports, they arrived there at eight in the evening, and found Dinah playing Maria's former grand piano with two fingers.

“Well, that’s the first time I hear you play,” said Hamid.

“I never played anything, but the sound somehow captivates me,” she smiled. “I suppose you are all very hungry.”

“Could eat a horse,” said Hamid. “What have you been doing all day?”

“Oh, I should confess I’ve been a bit confused. Hope you don’t mind, but in the morning I couldn’t find my pocket mirror and I went to Sheila’s room to brush my hair. I hope I wasn’t out of bounds, but I found this ancient Persian mirror. Where on earth did you find this?!” she asked. She lifted the Silver Mirror from the piano.

“Hmm. Interesting that you found it!” said Sheila, wholly disinterested that Dinah had been trespassing in her room. “It is actually the only remnant of the Delphi treasures we still have. Why

have we forgotten to mention that mirror, Mike? It is, after all, a *Persian* mirror.”

Michael shrugged his shoulders.

“But this is a very *strange* mirror!” said Dinah. “When I started to comb my hair and looked into it I didn’t see my own reflection, but that of the woman whose picture stands on your dressing table.”

“You mean Maria, my niece?” said Sheila.

“Yes.” Dinah confirmed.

“You mean you actually *saw* her through the mirror?”

“Oh, yes, there she was, in full colour, as if she was holding a selfie camera, and she was also combing her hair, like I was.”

“She spoke... through the mirror?” asked Michael.

“No, no. I don’t think she was at all aware of me. I only saw her doing her normal daily routines. She looked quite unkempt, a bit older than in the photo. After brushing her hair, she must have put her mirror in a stand, because I saw her walking away and reading a newspaper. She walked up and down a little room and I could at some point even make out the title of the newspaper: ‘*The Connexion*’. It is an English-language French newspaper, and I could even make out the date: it was *today’s* newspaper!”

“That’s it!” said Michael.

“What?” asked Sheila.

“There were *two* mirrors in the trunk of Mnemosyne! Maria has the other one!”

“Blimey!” said Sheila.

“And then, Dinah, did you see anything else?” asked Hamid.

“An old piano, with a score on it. She played a little, but then the image faded and I just saw my own face again.”

“So, Maria is alive, and we got a glance of the place where she is now... somewhere in France?” asked Michael.

“That is what I believe,” said Dinah demurely.

“But... that’s great news, Mike!” said Sheila.

“I certainly hope she is well,” said Michael.

“She didn’t look too bad. Only older and somewhat pale and tired,” said Dinah. “I hope I haven’t intruded on your privacy. I feel a bit embarrassed. I just thought of quickly brushing my hair and start making a decent meal, and then all this happened,” said Dinah.

“That’s quite alright, Dinah,” said Sheila. “This is the best news we’ve had in years. I just wonder why we forgot all about this mirror. Good fortune that you found it!”

“Maybe we should start dinner, and try to let things sink in for a while,” Michael proposed.

Somehow Dinah had managed to produce a tasty meal, with ingredients wholly forgotten by Michael and Sheila in the abundant space of the kitchen cupboards. Even spices they didn’t know they had. Conversation, however, centred on the enigma of the Persian Mirror.

“Please tell me where you found this mirror,” asked Dinah.

“I actually found it first on Madeira,” said Michael. “It was part of the burial treasure of this primeval hybrid Goddess we talked about earlier. And there were two mirrors, as I now clearly recall. But then we found this specimen in the rubble, when we went to look at the Delphi site the morning after the earthquake, when all the dust had settled.”

“What does it read on the front side?” asked Dinah.

“It says that it was given as a wedding present to Kundris, the wife of Democritus by Amestris, the wife of Xerxes I,” said Michael.

“So, if there are two mirrors then I suppose persons can keep in touch with each other... through these mirrors?” Hamid asked.

“I’ve used it all summer normally, and have not seen anything out of the ordinary,” Sheila said. “I wonder why it worked with Dinah.”

“Well, I think we cannot guess about the causes, but maybe Dinah should keep the mirror for a while, if the contact with Maria returns,” said Michael.

“I hope it is not dangerous,” said Dinah.

“Maybe we could designate them as *entangled mirrors*,” said Michael. “I don’t think they are so dangerous, because Sheila has used hers nearly every day.”

“Hah! Makes me think of the *Stone of Suleiman* of Charles Williams,” Sheila laughed heartily.

“More like the *Palantiri*, the seeing stones of Tolkien,” Michael chuckled.

“Of course we should not laugh about this matter, although I agree that it has a comical side too,” said Hamid.

“As Archie MacLachlan suspected, it was used as a counselling device, but now it appears it is actually a communication device. And now I distinctly remember there were two mirrors in the trunk of Mnemosyne. So I must presume that Maria has the other one,” Michael stated.

“*Entangled* mirrors you say? Hardly possible for macro-objects,” said Hamid.

“Well, Hamid, such mirrors have actually been devised some years ago for reflection of gravitational waves,” Dinah commented.

“Really?” Hamid gasped.

“Yes, but these mirrors were part of an interferometric setup, in the improvement of the LIGO system for detection of gravitational waves. Not quite the same as these ancient mirrors,” Dinah clarified.

“Hmm... I saw a picture somewhere of such a mirror. I should try to locate that book.” said Michael.

“What kind of book?” asked Dinah.

“I forgot... must search my papers again,” said Michael.

Dinner was soon finished, and the party decided to relocate to the drawing room with a glass of port. Some recent history was discussed related to the quest they had embarked on 5 years earlier. The final phase Michael summarized as: “There was a great devastation of the whole site, and we couldn’t do anything to save Maria. On the next morning we returned to the site, to see if anything could be found. No trace of her. Only this mirror we found close to a huge hole in the ground.”

“We must reopen the case and start investigations,” said Hamid.

“I’ve seen enough bloodshed. This is not a game,” said Dinah

demurely.

“I agree with Hamid. Our cause is a matter of clarification of historical events and the role of some strange artefacts that are related to them. These things have puzzled us for a long time,” said Sheila.

“I don’t feel up to such a quest,” said Dinah, “especially when there are occult powers at work.”

“We are all safe now, Dinah, safe from all the sorcery,” said Hamid.

“I suppose Dinah has some sort of trauma,” said Sheila.

“Would you mind if I tell them our story, Dinah?” asked Hamid.

“Sure, go ahead, but I’m off to get some sleep. It has been a long, tiring day, also for me,” she sighed, walking out of the room. In the doorstep she turned around and said: “And don’t make it too late, Hamid!”

Dinah closed the door after her, and Sheila went to the bar.

“I suppose it’s getting time for something stronger,” she said with a slightly impish smile. She scooped the precious bottle of 1985 Ardbeg from Kilbirnie, of which still half had remained through the summer. With some glasses and the bottle she returned to the settee, and carefully filled the glasses.

“Cheers!” said Hamid, and he took a careful nip. “Oh, that’s an intriguing taste, if I may say so.”

“We are in Scotland, and this is one of her finest treasures,” said Sheila, “although I should warn of the phenol, which is fairly toxic.”

“Well, I will start,” said Hamid. “As I mentioned earlier, I was involved as a negotiator in the UN envoy for establishing a truce in Syria. This was always a problem, because the whole civil war in Syria, which started as a legitimate protest movement, was in danger of developing into a proxy war between the US and Russia. In April 2012 Kofi Annan acted as the UN–Arab League special representative for Syria, and he tried to agree a ceasefire. This proved to be difficult; in fact he called it ‘*mission impossible*’, because all parties were strongly divided and the rebel groups were pitted against Bashar’s regime. During the negotiations the rebels and the Syrian army continued to

fight each other even after a ceasefire was established. At about the same time, seventy nations met in Istanbul in a conference to support the Syrian opposition and they tried to increase pressure on the Syrian government. The Syrian National Council, representing the Syrian opposition, called for direct action and promised to financially and materially support the FSA, the Free Syrian Army. They proclaimed earlier that if the regime fails to accept the terms of the peace process set by the Arab League and end their atrocities against their own citizens, the Friends of Syria would aid the Syrian opposition by means of military advisers, or even training and provision of arms to defend themselves. Unfortunately, the Arab League was internally highly divided, much more so than the Western nations realised. In fact, the NATO countries had by their actions after 9/11 greatly aggravated the situation. Some years earlier, as a common member of the Arab League, I had sided with Muammar Gaddafi on the point that we should not allow external interference on the Arabian Peninsula, especially by the USA, the UK and France, but also not by Russia, for obvious reasons. As towards neighbouring Turkey, my position was quite precarious. Faced with the situation in Syria, my position as a UN peace envoy became gradually compromised, because I found myself in the wrong camp. In the Istanbul meeting, the whole Arab League leaped behind the prime minister of Qatar and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. When I visited Bashar al-Assad and tried to start the negotiations, he flatly denounced the Istanbul meeting as '*a conceited conspiracy against Syria*' calling the participants rather enemies of Syria than its friends. He called Obama a liar and a wolf in sheep's clothes and found his demand to step down absurd. I knew Bashar from my Oxford years, when he was studying in London, and thus had easy access to him. I reasoned with him that I understood his standpoint very well, but that in this stage some genuine diplomacy was required to get a truce off the ground. We discussed over a nice bottle of Syrian Arak - maybe not as exceptional as this whiskey but special also. I explained to Bashar that the majority of Syrians are not satisfied with the situation, and I accused

him of having misused the Iraqi scenario to keep up a false dichotomy in the minds of the people by using the slogan '*to keep the regime or descend into chaos*'. I quoted the words of the activist Suhair Atassi that the *status quo* was a cosmetic stability, wrongly imposed on the people by oppression. Recalling to him the *Damascus Spring* of 2001, the citizens of Syria had become afraid of change, as they believed it could only bring disaster, but I said there are alternatives. So, we talked and dived deeper. In the end we came to an interesting accord. In the end, he was even less concerned about his own position when it would jeopardise the future of his country. He above all feared that his country would fall into pieces, that it would be divided into parts by the Western nations. He said his father would turn around in his grave if that would happen. Memories of the San Remo Conference, '*that piece of treachery*', as he called it, were still taboo in Syria, and the return of the French was obviously anathema. I coined the idea to include Iran in the group of *Friends of Syria*, and furthered the idea that he could reform the Syrian parliament to include more Syrian ethnic groups, including leaders of the opposition. Bashar feared that there would be brawls in parliament, such as those sometimes shown in the Russian Duma. I said that such scenario would be highly probable if they went on leaning towards Russia, as they did. '*Point taken*', he said. I suggested that he could give clemency to Suhair al-Atassi, who was then living in exile in France. '*We'll see about that!*' he said grumpily. Then I proposed that, if things would look tight, a higher degree of self-rule of the Northern provinces would need to be considered. Bashar shook his head, and reached back to some talks we had in London in 1992, concerning the deplorable state of international law in a conference organised there, again wailing about the illegality of the Truce of Versailles and the San Remo agreement. '*Was it not that this document that had caused the Second World War?*' he moaned. I said he should not cry over a hundred years of spilled whiskey."

Hamid displayed an impish smile raising his glass.

"Yes, I get the point!" Michael chuckled.

“Well, also Bashar appreciated the joke. He straightaway refilled our empty glasses with the very substantial Arak. We enjoyed this not uninteresting booze for a while, and then he asked me how I got involved in the peace envoy. After some explanations, he seemed highly amused to hear that I was the ruler of a tiny enclave in Turkey, which had somehow survived the division of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War, and he inquired how large the Phrygian parliament was. I informed him that there were only twelve seats. He found it all very funny. *‘Such a small country and such a small parliament! Do you have even anything to fight about?’* he laughed. *‘More than you would suspect,’* I said, *‘but we are at least not throwing bombs at each other’*. He admitted that I had a point, joking that for such a small country not many bombs were needed. So, in the end he somehow he relented. As the peace plan was in jeopardy, and our conversation was rather smooth, we thus struck a preliminary accord. We were both quite relieved and somewhat tipsy. So, the agreement was that I would travel to Iran to get their official viewpoint, and their possible consent to join the peace process, while he would look into the possibility to push through the reforms of the People's Council of Syria, which had previously stranded. It would almost certainly stop the fighting. I remember having a splitting headache in the morning after all the heavy arak, but I was able to call Kofi Annan, passing on the good news. He, of course, was all for it. *‘Well done, Hamid!’* he cheered through the phone. I had hardly arrived in Teheran, when a representative of the Iranian intelligence service entered my hotel room and informed me that I had been put on the CIA list of alleged terrorists on grounds that I was being viewed as a strong supporter of Gaddafi and Assad, and was a *‘serious obstacle to the peace process’*. He showed me a paper, signed by the US president in person, to that effect. I asked how they got hold of that incriminating document. He said: *‘We are bugging the Mossad’*. Evidently, the Israelis were informed beforehand about all the US covert operations, such as the drone strikes.”

“What the hell did you do then?” asked Michael.

Here Hamid paused for a while, and took a sip of the Ardbeg. “That’s what I asked the intelligence guy whose name I never learned. He said that in Teheran and in Gordianum I would be fairly safe, but that in other places in the Middle East I would be sitting duck. He advised that I should especially avoid countries like Pakistan, Yemen, Afghanistan, and Somalia where they regularly had drone strikes. I pointed out that as a middle man in the Syrian peace negotiations I would need to travel frequently to these countries and that they certainly wouldn’t attack a UN peace attaché. ‘*I wouldn’t be so sure*,’ the intelligence man said. I asked if there were any strikes in Iraq, because I had to go there the following week. ‘*If you can find discretely an unofficial address to stay, you should be safe*,’ the agent proposed. This was because the Americans were at that time drawing out of Iraq. So there I was: an outlawed peace-negotiator in a virtually impossible situation. How on earth was I to move around discretely?” Hamid sighed.

“I remember having a sleepless night, but I decided to hang on to the plan. On the next day, the Iranian officials were all for it. Iran would support Bashar al-Assad in his attempts to broaden his parliament and they would join the Friends of Syria, whilst trying to limit unwarranted foreign influence from the Western countries and Russia. I asked them for a copy of the CIA ‘*death warrant*’, which they duly supplied. I sent it on to Bashar with a little note, mentioning that this might be a nice trump card in case the US would start to make trouble again. This was the beginning of the breakthrough the UN got. Bashar mended his ways, and during two years he oversaw the reconstruction of his country, initially with some difficulty, but finally he stepped down in all peace and quiet, and Syria was not anymore bothered by any foreign interference. Unfortunately, I never heard anything of Bashar after my visit. Maybe he works as an eye surgeon nowadays, but at least the country came steadily to rest and it had also a beneficial effect on the whole situation in the Middle East. Certainly also for Iran the situation had been dire, because they were the last country on the list of the US neo-cons for regime change. For me,

however, it was the start of a hectic time: I had to go underground. I couldn't even hide in my palace in Gordianum.”

“So, you went to Baghdad?” asked Michael.

“Yes, but let me rewind my memory for a while,” said Hamid. He again took a nip of the whiskey, closing his eyes in silence for a while.

“Ah... Where was I,” he then mumbled.

“You were going to Iraq,” said Michael.

“Yes, yes. In my predicament, connections via the United Nations I couldn't use, so I relied on a lesser known acquaintance in Iraq who would be difficult to trace. I had a friendly relation with a physician, Rashid, who used to work for the Al-Yiddi hospital of which I am the patron. He moved to the outskirts of Baghdad two years earlier, and he had mentioned a few times that I would always be welcome to stay with him. He had left his card, and he boasted of having a comfortable, modern house, even with a swimming pool in the garden. So, in May 2012, after my official business in Baghdad, I just got into a taxi and turned up at his doorstep, without informing anybody. He was at first somewhat surprised, but genuinely happy to see me. I informed him of the situation in great detail, and asked if I could stay with him for a while, *incognito*. He was all for it, realising that I had to pay a large price for the peace in Syria. Dinah was his daughter, which I knew already from the time they lived in Gordianum. I noticed of course that she was of extraordinary beauty and intelligence, but she was twenty six and I was already getting fifty, so I made no illusions about my chances with her. I just stayed with them, helping them at home and in return they provided me with food and shelter. I also started to work occasionally in a nearby cafeteria. Slowly, my friend was starting to get suspicious of his daughter's increasing interest in me. She did not know at all in what predicament I was, and she must have wondered greatly why the monarch of a small country was staying as a guest with them for such a long time. As she was studying diligently at the university, she had not much occasion to get involved with me, but according to Rashid she was starting to feel attracted to me, maybe due to the strange situation

and her knowledge of my position as the ruler of a tiny country. I promised to discuss it with her, and so I did. So, I disclosed to her that I needed to stay undercover for a while due to an *American threat*, as I phrased it. This had exactly the opposite effect: her interest in me was suddenly amplified, and her evening studies started to suffer even more. Of course, this was all very inconvenient for both my friend and his wife. So, I was thinking of changing my cover. Still, Rashid convinced me to stay on, and somehow he got the situation under control. He pointed out to Dinah that my predicament was very serious, and that she should be very silent about me, not talk to anyone, and so on. I stayed there for nearly a year, and the next summer I decided to call the palace in Gordianum. I had avoided calling by phone a long time, but after half a year I thought it would be safe to use Rashid's mobile phone. It was in the beginning of June 2013, and it was a very long call, as you can imagine. I talked to my mother and my brother. I didn't reveal where I was, but it didn't enter my brain that such calls can always be easily traced and recorded. At the same time, the situation in Iraq started to get worse. Since the Western coalition forces were reduced, the insurgency against the sitting government grew steadily. Now and then bombs exploded in the neighbourhood, even though the area had been fairly safe even during the US occupation. Then the day of peril arrived..."

Hamid finished his whiskey, and continued: "The last days in Baghdad were indescribable. On a Thursday afternoon I was helping out in the nearby coffee shop, cleaning up near closing time, when a huge explosion shook the whole building and shattered all the windows. I was tossed under a table, but some of the customers were seriously wounded by the glass flying around. After my habit, I tended the various wounds of the five or so people that had been lingering in the shop. Slowly I started to direct my attention to the site of the explosion. I stepped outside, and I realised that the house of my friend, some two hundred meters down the street, had been completely levelled. No stone was left standing, only one big fire and a huge black

cloud of smoke. Two nearby houses had serious damage. By an enormous stroke of luck there were no casualties. Some twenty people wounded, but as it was a regular working day most inhabitants were still out working. My friend Rashid, his wife and Dinah were at the university campus in the centre of Baghdad having dinner to celebrate Dinah's passing of two exams. An hour later they arrived, and inspecting the scorched rubble of their house, they all burst in tears and Rashid dropped to his knees. However, their tears were less due to the house, it seemed. They hadn't yet noticed me, and they all thought I had perished. The sheer happiness they showed when they saw me alive and well was absolutely... well... what can I say." Hamid was suddenly silent and a slight quiver appeared on his lips, but then he took control again and continued: "On the spot I promised them that they would be taken care of. If they wanted, they could come with me and live in the palace in Gordianum. Rashid said: '*I think we have little choice now because we are all on the street!*' We couldn't have foreseen what came next. Suddenly, in the falling dusk, we heard a rattling sound from the sky. The stones of the street were starting to fly around and we took to our heels. We entered the coffee shop, trying to find shelter. I knew where the basement was with all the supplies, and tried to hide there with Rashid and his family. In the end, it was only me and Dinah who could reach the basement, the building being blown off its foundations by a missile, or something of that kind. This time there were many casualties. Among them were Rashid and his wife."

Silence fell in the room, the grim account of unofficial recent history weighing heavily on its weary inhabitants.

"I must say, Hamid," said Sheila, "that this exceeds anything we could have imagined. Have they even tried to find the culprits?"

"Oh, it was in the news, in Baghdad, sure. The insurrection movement was blamed, but, honestly speaking, no one has ever seriously investigated the event."

"Recently I re-read this report *Living under Drones*, which came over the table in Strathlachlan, and they used to make often dual strikes like

the one you described. They often maimed first aid personnel, which is clearly a war crime!” said Michael.

“Yes, well, worse things have happened in Iraq, not only by the Americans,” said Hamid. “The country was in total disarray.”

“So, you took Dinah home?” asked Sheila.

“Yes, she was for half a year at the hospital, and then she was well enough to move into the palace. I pledged my loyalty to her, saying that ‘*I am now your slave!*’”

“A traumatised, unequal relation, I guess,” said Sheila.

“Yes, as a result she started to dominate me, then the royal staff, and in the end my brother and my mother. Still, I was not ready to marry her, as she so much wanted. ‘*You can make me Queen of your tiny Kingdom*’, she said. ‘*Nobody will take offense*’. Unfortunately, my mother and brother took offense, as anybody not acquainted with the psychological intricacies of the situation would. Basically, I was in a deadlock: I yet didn’t quite realise I loved her and I wasn’t sure of her motivations. So, I was abiding time.”

“Well, there the Pythia really hit a sensitive spot!” said Michael.

“Indeed!” said Hamid, cheerfully laughing.

“As they say... everything is fair in Love and War,” said Sheila.
“Really, time to go to bed, boys.”

“Sure, Ma’am,” said Hamid.

Slowly the former King of Phrygia rose. Michael followed him through the kitchen to the back door. Sandy was sound asleep in her basket in front of the back door, and Hamid carefully circled it.

“Thanks, Hamid,” said Michael, “for the rare confidentiality.”

“Well, that’s really nothing,” Hamid replied. “I have the feeling we are not quite at the end of this story.”

“I think so too,” said Michael. “Sleep well!”

Hamid disappeared in the muggy night air, and Michael hoped he wouldn’t stumble on the road to his camper in the darkness under the influence of the peaty whiskey that certainly would give him a headache in the morning.

Despite the tiring day and the long conversation, Michael couldn't quite get his sleep. Flashes of recent world history passed him by, as he had followed it closely through the many media outlets, mainly on the internet. The Syrian peace was indeed somewhat of a mystery, Kofi Annan having been somewhat low profile about it. Hamid's account at least explained some of the anomalies of the peace process in the Middle East. Despite Hamid's support, Gadhafi could not be saved from the claws of the '*hawks*'. His country fell into the hands of unruly separatist clans that couldn't arrest the flood of refugees from the African countries into Europe, a situation Gadhafi had warned the EU about various times before his demise. The European countries were getting concerned that a similar flood-gate would be opened when the war in Syria would escalate. As he remembered, a secret document had leaked that promised US armed support to the Syrian rebels to topple Bashar al-Assad. This was clearly against the peace agreements and constituted a major breach of confidence in US foreign policy. It had caused a surge of indignation all around the world. As the situation developed, the Obama administration was gradually losing its credibility, and even the US economy started to topple over *Damascus-gate*, as it was then called in the media. Michael recalled the sentence, hidden in the thesis of his father-in-law: '*When Midas on his Throne will reign, and Gyges commits his infamy anew, the True Adept will set out and leave the lofty gate to Damascus askew*'. They were odd words in the context of the conflicts in Syria. As Michael recalled his visit to Damascus and the discussions with his old colleague Eric Simmons at the Bristol Gardens, who had witnessed these defining times in history from a closer angle, he kept wondering who was the Midas and who the Gyges that John had been referring to. He asked himself who would have been behind this small, covert shipment of weapons into Syria by his own party. Hardly anybody knew they were going there, and yet they had been protected by ships of the British Navy. There was clearly a link missing, and he suspected a mole in their ranks. When they had been in the middle of it all, bringing the cherished Cross of Sharon back to the age-

old Abby, the only genuine standard of the New Covenant, they must have had at least one traitor in their midst and another person not yet identified, but obviously very rich. And then who was this *True Adept*?

At eight ‘o clock Michael rose and started to prepare some breakfast, according to his habit. He then fetched from his library the precious copy of *La Trés Sainte Trinosophie*, arguably written by the count of St. Germain. As Michael had suddenly remembered, the second handwritten copy, as it was preserved by the Tiloch clan on Madeira, contained a picture of a very similar mirror as the one retrieved from Delphi. It adorned the end of the introductory chapter written by a person who was imprisoned in the ‘*retreat of criminals in the dungeons of the Inquisition*’. The recipient of the writing, Philochatus, to whom the writer promised to raise ‘*the impenetrable veil which hides from the eyes of common men the tabernacle, the sanctuary wherein the Eternal has lodged the secrets of nature, kept for a few that are privileged, the few Elect whom His omnipotence created that they may SEE, and seeing, may soar after Him in the vast expanse of His Glory and deflect upon mankind one of the Rays that shine around His golden Throne*’. However, the writer warns his subject: ‘*Two stumbling blocks equally dangerous will constantly present themselves to you. One of them would outrage the sacred rights of every individual. It is Misuse of the power which God will have entrusted to you; the other, which would bring ruin upon you, is Indiscretion. Both are born of the same mother, both owe their existence to pride.*’ The writer particularly warns his subject of the weakness of indiscretion, ‘*the imperious craving to inspire astonishment and admiration*’, a fault he had succumbed to himself, for which he now pays his price: ‘*One moment destroyed everything, I spoke, and it all vanished like a cloud. O my son, follow not in my steps. Let no vain desire to shine before men bring you, too, to disaster. Think of me, your friend, writing to you from this dungeon, my body broken by torture!*’ Then he writes that he will be delivered from his torturers after two long years: ‘*The avenging God has pardoned His repentant child. An aerial spirit has entered through the walls which separate me from the world; he has shown himself to me, resplendent with light, and has determined the duration of my captivity. Within two years my sufferings will end. My torturers upon*

entering my cell will find it empty and, soon purified by the four elements, pure as the genius of fire, I shall resume the glorious station to which Divine goodness has raised me. But how distant as yet is this time! At the end, the introduction read: ‘*Adieu, Philochatus! Do not mourn me. The clemency of the Eternal equals His justice. At the first mysterious assembly you will see your friend again. I salute you in the name of God. Soon I shall give the kiss of peace to my brother.*’ And then there was the drawing of a mirror, surrounded by some sprigs of spruce. Michael wondered about the mirror here.

Sheila then arrived in the kitchen and said: “Not the best of weather today to continue with the renovation of the *Emily*, I’m afraid.”

“The *Ondine*, you mean... No, also don’t feel much like it.”

“And our guests will be leaving today,” said Sheila demurely, taking seat at the table opposite Michael.

After a long silence, the pair finishing their coffee and their usual sandwiches, Michael said: “Look at this!”

Sheila took the book Michael was handing over, and studied the picture of the mirror.

“Ah... There it was! Indeed... fairly similar!”

“Why would it conclude a text which is all about keeping secrets, and about being in the hope of being released from prison by higher orders?”

“A means of escape via another dimension?” asked Sheila.

“Charles Williams’ stone, indeed! Might be that a communication device will release our dear Maria,” said Michael. “And what about your father? You think that Hamid is right?”

“You mean that he may have been imprisoned somewhere and that he somehow managed to escape with all his writings and this book?”

“It’s worth a thought, but I don’t think he was imprisoned. Rather he was trying to save the Rosicrucian Order at Malême from some impending doom. They must have been under some sort of threat, and John must have had enough money to help them move. And then on Madeira he deliberately left this manuscript for us to find!”

“In Maria’s organ.”

"Yes, and now I just wonder if Maria left one of these mirrors in Delphi on purpose."

"Does that make any sense, Mike? Would she have had time for that? Did she even know about the power of these mirrors?"

"Well, she had them in her possession for a long time. Now I just wonder about this lucid dream I had when I was there."

"About being rescued from the *Slough of Despond*, together with my father?" Sheila recalled with some incredulity in her voice.

"It was almost like having a mirror into the past," said Michael, rising from the table. "I must re-read a few things, and then I will come to say goodbye to our guests."

It was nearly twelve 'o clock, when Hamid and Dinah entered the kitchen through the rear door. Sandy barked, but now in the tone of a merry welcome, whipping her tail about.

Sheila came down to meet them. "Well, it seems your departure day is a bit sad, both from the point of the weather and the revelations of last evening," she said.

"Hope you don't mind that Hamid has bothered you with our sad story," said Dinah. "Time has already mended our wounds quite well."

"Then, if you say so, I'm happy for you both. Sit down and have some tea or coffee before you go. I think Michael still has something to say. I'll fish him from his study upstairs."

"I guess so," said Hamid. "At least I'm not quite done with the subject."

"Can we not let the past rest, Hamid?" asked Dinah.

"In due time, we must, of course," Hamid consented. "But we discussed that at least we should help our friends to find their precious relative back."

Sheila had put the kettle on, and then went to fetch Michael. She found him lying on his bed, on his back, staring at the ceiling.

"It seems you have read your books. Come and say goodbye, Mike, to Hamid and Dinah."

Michael jumped out of the bed. "Yes, yes, of course!"

Highly distracted he came down the stairs and in the kitchen he poured himself a cup of tea.

“Well, Hamid and Dinah,” he said. “Your visit stirred up a lot of things. Suddenly, it seems we have a lot on our plate. Maybe we can summarise our quest as follows: *We seek him here, we seek him there. Those Scotties seek him everywhere. Is he in heaven? Is he in hell? This elusive Count who did so well.*”

“Meaning?” asked Hamid.

“If my instincts tell me right, we might be on the trail of the most expensive and most ingenious treasure heist of all time.”

Three jaws dropped out of sheer astonishment.

“What on Earth gave you that idea!” Sheila cried.

“You sound almost like Sherlock Holmes, Mister Willmore!” Hamid laughed heartily.

“I wouldn’t laugh at my husband,” said Sheila. “If Mike is on to something, he’s usually been proven right.”

Michael started: “Conspiracy theories abound nowadays, wouldn’t you say? And why? Because the governments of the world have so many secrets. Such a situation opens up temptations for certain individuals. If it would be all about stealing works of ancient art and gold and precious stones, well, that is pathetic, but one suspicion I have: I’m almost certain that they have also *killed* for the job,” said Michael.

“Maria, you mean?” asked Sheila.

“If we may believe the revelation of the mirror, Maria is alive and well. But they almost certainly killed Phillip Chance, together with so many others in the cathedral.”

“So, you suspect Kenneth Tielock?” asked Hamid.

“I do, but I slowly start to believe that we have underestimated our friendly police-inspector Miller. If he was a covert arms broker for BAE systems, as Hamid revealed, then it is clear who was behind that arms delivery that we were so unsuspectingly carrying into Syria, and maybe even behind our unexpected safety convoy on the Mediterranean. So,

there was a serious conspiracy going on behind our backs, which could have jeopardized our mission. But then Benji Miller got knocked out by Hamid's throne and the attempt of the separatists to overpower our convoy was thwarted by John's accident."

"So you think the clan of Kenneth Tielock is behind the Bristol cathedral bombing?" asked Hamid.

"Maybe, because Phillip was on their trail, and I think your former college pal keeps Maria hostage. So, we'll need to pull all the resources we can get to find them."

"So, we start with Kenny?" asked Hamid.

"As Benji Miller has escaped our grip, we must start with him, yes. It seems he has indeed moved away from Crete, and resides somewhere in France. We can use this book as bait."

Michael lifted the small booklet of St. Germain. "Go to Troyes in France first. Ask if somebody has lent their copy, and let them look over this copy. I think you may catch a large fish."

7.

Academic Interludium II

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3. Historical Perspectives

From Alchemy to Theosophy.



HEN in 1888 the redoubtable Helena Petrovna Blavatsky published “*The Secret Doctrine*”, theosophy was not an entirely new vogue in Europe, but it is irrefutable that the year represented an important milestone, because in her *Magnum Opus* Blavatsky distilled - albeit sometimes in a rather longwinded fashion - a more lucid picture out of the highly variegated and confusing soup of symbols and terminology of the world’s religions. Blavatsky, with her group of “truth-seekers”, drew up clear connection lines between many esoteric, exoteric and scientific principles, in a few cases even much ahead of her time. Through her efforts, theosophy leaped forward, by far outrunning the notions of the *τηεօօπηօι* of the early church fathers, and it accelerated the hitherto steady line of progress from the Hermetic, Alchemical and Rosicrucian movements into what one might call a *legitimate line of theosophical inquiry*. The scientific mind, however, still adopts a view of theosophy as being a speculative world of unproven concepts, and doubtful, even silly, beliefs. On the other hand, it has been affirmed by Manly Hall on so many memorable occasions that there can be no real understanding of the *Absolute First Cause*. So, where does this help us to unveil the crossing point of modern theories of physics and the Divine Mystery of Being? The tenets of physics are nowadays also not readily digestible for the common mind. If we would dispense on top of all this a whole anthology of theosophical concepts, we would readily end up in marshlands, and instead of reaching to the heavens we would sink into a poisonous mire. We would

aspire to the ability, like a Midas of some sort, to turn all our leaden ideas into gold. We know we are poor in our understanding: the cosmologist reaches out to the stars to find the structure and history of the macro-cosmos, while the chemist analyses his molecules to find the hidden forces of the atoms and Life. In the end, however, we are the compounded product of both the micro- and macro-cosmos, as secretly coded in the works of the Alchemists.

The beginnings of Alchemy

In his *fabulae 191 & 274*, the Roman author Gaius Julius Hyginus muses that Midas was the son of the Goddess Cybele and the inventor of the black and white lead. Cybele is our first source of Theosophical knowledge, as it was from her that the *Divine Arcanum* was communicated in the most ancient of times (i.e. the *Lightning of Cybele*). Unfortunately, as ancient sources attest, the recorded documents of the teachings of Cybele were lost during purges of the Library at Alexandria as early as the Ptolemaic times. Cybele's legacy, however, lived on in the East in various scriptures, such as these from which also Blavatsky frequently quotes. The teachings included intricate doctrines about cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis. A *Universal Substance*, which Alchemists called *Mercurius animalis*, the Rosicrucians (after the Kabbalists) *Hadamah* and the Theosophists *Fohat* or *Primordial Substance* is of central interest, and here it will be simply called the *Universal Substance*. In the unique treatise of Mary Anne Atwood about Alchemy, the nature of the Universal Substance, as it was known to the Alchemists, was described in somewhat obscure detail. She quotes the *Speculum* of Arnold di Villanova that reads: "...There abides in nature a certain pure matter, which, being discovered and brought by art to perfection, converts to itself proportionally all imperfect bodies that it touches."²²²

This pure matter is thus co-dependent on impure matter and might well represent the Mind-like properties of matter proposed by David Bohm, which pervade everything and subtly change the state of things even at a great distance. Thus, the legend of Midas - that he turned everything into gold - actually portrays the spirit pervading matter and makes it aware, or 'shine'. According to Atwood: "*... the Greeks and eastern sages derived all things in common from a certain pure and hidden fire; Stoics, Pythagoreans, Platonists, and Peripatetics view with each other in celebrating the occult virtues of the Ether; its all-pervading essence and perfective power: in it they place the providential regulation of nature; it was the very life and substance of their theosophy, in which from the highest to the lowest confines of existence, from Jove to the last link in the infernal monarchy, all were inhabiting the ethereal world ...*"

There are various places in the thesis of Atwood that point specifically to Democritus, portraying him as a practical chemist. From various scattered sources Atwood pieced together that he likely studied the Hermetic Sciences in Egypt for several years, as Pythagoras and Thales did before him and Plato after him, that he (according to Pliny) was even rather famous as a practitioner of the occult sciences, and taught these both in his native city of Abdera and later in Athens, when Socrates was teaching there, and that during his sojourn in Memphis he became associated with a Hebrew woman named Maria, a woman who, uncommon for that time, had made advanced studies in Philosophy and Hermetic Science. Atwood writes that Democritus was heralded later as the *father of experimental philosophy*, having written a book of *Sacred Physics* on the subject, and having been acquainted with "*celestial water... which is a spirit of the nature of the ether and quintessence of things; from where potable gold, and the stone of philosophers, takes its beginning...*" The Alchemical writings of

Democritus are unfortunately lost, but of his diary, written on a series of papyrus scrolls, some parts are still extant and in secure possession of the Order of the Rosy Cross at Malême, the brotherhood for which this thesis is exclusively written. These scrolls were evidently taken from the library of Alexandria by Titus Flavius Clemens when he was forced into exile, and they are written in Democritus' own hand. They at least confirm that he was a practical chemist, who travelled a great deal in his early years. The two surviving scrolls are solely dedicated to his travels in Persia, where he has embarked on a quest to retrieve the lost sarcophagus of Cybele. The order of events is obscured by the lost scrolls, which precede the recovered ones, but a rather complete picture emerges still from the references he makes to his earlier writings. According to his diary then, Democritus was greatly concerned with moral issues, and was on a tireless quest to unravel the *Beginning of Beginnings*.

He writes about his early years when the Persian ruler Xerxes invaded Greece. Evidently, his father, Athenocritus, remained neutral in the first of many conflicts with Persia and even bestowed hospitality on Xerxes and his entourage by receiving him at his mansion in Abdera, where they happened to pass by. However, Athenocritus made a wager with Xerxes that he wouldn't succeed in his conquest of Greece. As it seems, Xerxes lost the wager and bestowed a large fortune in gold on Democritus' family, leaving some of his sages and servants there as well. By this event, Democritus' economic freedom and future as philosopher was secured.

As appears from the short report of his earlier years, Democritus married the daughter of one of Xerxes' former servants, named Kundris, a learned Chaldean, whose counsel he greatly valued. In his hunger for more knowledge, Kundris urges Democritus to travel to Hermopolis and study with "*Hermes the Third Great*", who at that time held the position of

high priest and teacher on the throne inherited from his two predecessors, the half-God Poimandres and the God Toth. In his papers Democritus describes his teacher as “*Hermes III*” or “*Hermes the Third Great*”, and we must therefore conclude that it was *Hermes Trismegistus*. From him Democritus obtains the “*General Sermon*”, teachings which were open to all motivated apprentices. Unfortunately, the full account of these teachings is lost. In his next scroll, he dwells on the past, and grieves about the death of his spouse, which came at a critical time when Greece was in cultural decline. As the result of a long discussion with his pupil Hippocrates, and some unsuccessful attempts at obtaining the Universal Substance in his workshop, he leaves for Delphi in a depressed state of mind. Also these discussions and the reports of his experiments, however, are only mentioned in passing. At Delphi, however, the Pythia is somewhat dismayed by his questions, and summons him to retrieve the Cist of Cybele. This is the point where the extant scrolls take off.

First he travels to Sardis where he investigates the temple site dedicated to Cybele, which was burnt during the rule of Darius by a clan of Etruscans. He finds nothing there and he then travels deeper into Persia. The Cist of Cybele he finally exhumes at the old temple site dedicated to Abzu in the oldest city of Persia, Eridu. He then brings the trunk back to Delphi and pays his helpers. As a reward, the Pythia honours them all with a large celebration. Here the narrative takes a curious turn: when the party has ended and Democritus’ companions have left, the Pythia receives Democritus in the Adyton, and she opens the sarcophagus, which has the shape of a bare tree trunk. They find a well-preserved, two-headed creature, having a tree-like lower body. Democritus feels uncomfortable with having opened the trunk, seeing it as a desecration of the remains of the goddess Cybele, and protests to the Pythia that

this action is entirely against his will. The Pythia then explains that Cybele is in reality one of the ancient Titans, Mnemosyne, and her predecessor in Delphi, also called the Sibyl. She then turns to Democritus' golden ring, and explains that the ring he carries is the antagonist of Mnemosyne. Democritus is highly surprised that the Pythia has knowledge of his Ring, which he had received from his pupil Hippocrates and had secretly carried with him on his travels, concealed in his pocket, and which he presumed to be the ring of Gyges. The Pythia asks him to reveal the Ring. Without further hesitation he shows it and she recognizes it as Abraxyne, in its form of a snake biting its own tail. The Pythia then performs a small ritual: she lights two oil lamps in the shape of an Ibis, and takes out of the mouth of one of the heads of the mummy three large seeds. She fits the ring around them and puts the seeds with the ring back into the mouth of the mummy. She says: '*Let us trap Abraxyne for a while in its own bait*'. Democritus greatly wonders at this unexpected turn of affairs, but is forced to acknowledge the authority of the Pythia. The trunk is closed, and lowered into a deep crevice in the Adyton by the Pythian priests. After this episode, Democritus leaves Delphi and travels back to Abdera.

In his last scroll, Democritus sums up his life, referring to many of his earlier writings. He discusses at length with Anaxagoras, the only philosopher-friend that has remained, and with him arrives at a final thesis of the *Universal Substance*:

'With external means the Matter of the Ancients can be trapped almost until annihilation, which in effect will expel Her False Forms, and assist Her to free herself by Her own Inner Will, becoming capable of wrapping herself around the aeon, and recreate herself. However, if She is constrained to depart unobtrusively, without outer cause or correction, then She may be caught up by external constraints, and become tarnished and imprisoned by these. She will pass through death from one form into

another without self-discovery, forced by the reign of External Will, which She has no power to resist. Thus, the skilful Master applies only the Restraining Force, and by careful design tortures and vexes the spirit close to its annihilation, and hence being brought under this necessity, is able to transform and restore itself, the force being continued.”

This citation is also found in Atwood’s thesis in a slightly modified form, and its meaning is somewhat obscure. Allegedly, the Universal Substance has its own inner will, and pertains to self-discovery, which transcends material life, but also cannot do without it. As it were, it needs to be imprisoned by matter to individuate and become aware, and it has to be released from it in a ‘regulated’ way, by which she will ‘wrap herself around the aeon’ (space-time). The driving force of self-discovery (individuation) is aptly portrayed in Carl Jung’s Gnostic writing “*Septem Sermones ad Mortuos*”^{<23>} as follows:

*“What is the harm, you ask, in not distinguishing oneself? If we do not distinguish, we get beyond our own nature, away from *creatura*. We fall into indistinctiveness, which is the other quality of the pleroma. We fall into the pleroma itself and cease to be creatures. We are given over to dissolution in nothingness. This is the death of the creature. Therefore we die in such measure as we do not distinguish. Hence the natural striving of the creature goes towards distinctiveness, fights against primeval, perilous sameness.”*

Thus, in the Hermetic-Gnostic view, the soul is the subject *and* object of cosmic individuation in the *Life Cycle*: she is born by the contact of the spirit with matter, then grows/individuates to her own world (the microcosmic mind), and then is liberated from the material realm, re-joining with the spirit.

It is thus probable that Alchemistic Gnosticism started with Democritus, who first obtained his esoteric knowledge from *Hermes III of Hermopolis*, but who then travelled to the lands of Persia to learn practical chemistry. Also his long disputations

with Hippocrates further increased his knowledge, and finally his own experiments further deepened understanding of the earlier mentioned *Life Cycle*. He must also have been well acquainted with the text of the *Smaragdine Tablet*, as given here in the translation by Isaac Newton:

Tis true without error, certain & most true.

That which is below is like that which is above & that which is above is like that which is below to do the miracles of one only thing and as all things have been & arose from one by the mediation of one, so all things have their birth from this one thing by adaptation.

The Sun is its father, the moon its mother, the Wind hath carried it in its belly, the Earth is its nurse. The father of all perfection in the whole world is here. Its force or power is entire if it be converted into earth. Separate thou the earth from the fire, the subtle from the gross sweetly with great industry.

It ascends from the earth to the heaven & again it descends to the earth & receives the force of things superior & inferior.

By this means you shall have the glory of the whole world & thereby all obscurity shall fly from you.

Its force is above all force. For it vanquishes every subtle thing & penetrates every solid thing. So was the world created.

From this are & do come admirable adaptations whereof the means (or process) is here in this. Hence I am called Hermes Trismegist, having the three parts of the philosophy of the whole world.

That which I have said of the operation of the Sun is accomplished & ended.

This text alludes to the Universal Substance that pervades all, but it also relates to the *above* and *below*, two worlds/realms that are isomorphic, very well fitting into our proposed monist/dualist worldview, in which all *creatura* are from a single source, but have evolved by adaptation; clearly a reference also to evolution theory.

Democritus frequently mentions the *Ring of Gyges* through which he attempts to transform metals. In antiquity there were only seven metals identified for practical use: gold, silver, copper, tin, lead, iron, and mercury. Although they were widely known and procedures for obtaining them must have been quite widespread in ancient Babylonia, China and Egypt, some of these metals are fairly scarce. It is quite likely that, at least in Egypt and China, electric and magnetic properties of metals were known, but not well-understood. Thus, metals incited a sense of awe and appealed to the religious sense, and transmutation of metals became a symbolic process for transmutation of the mind. The process of the Alchemist, the *Opus Magnum*, is mainly an attempt to attain spiritual transformation, from mind to soul, from soul to spirit. The later Alchemy arose out of syncretistic tendencies in various parts of the world, including Persia, but the starting point remained the *Corpus Hermeticum*. However, another important historical development took place before the Alchemy of the Middle Ages took off: the Christian revolution.

The Gnostic Christ and Sophia

The period of early Christianity saw the birth of a great variety of belief systems. Although the decrees of Christ were in main issues diametrically opposed to the Jewish, Greek and Roman dogmas, as Christ Himself declared (“*I am the New Law*”), a strong urge remained to preserve the ancient Hermetic and Greek Gnostic teachings (from Plato to Philo of Alexandria) and merge it with the tenets of Christianity^{<24>}. Particularly the Gospel of John strongly resonated with the Hermetic teachings. Various Gnostic Christian movements arose, but soon they were in the eyes of the early church fathers considered heresies. The Gnostics denounced by the church fathers in their writings were mainly Simon Magus, Valentinus, Basilides and Menander.

However, when the Gnostic adept Valentinus commits a heresy, it is clearly with a purpose of truth in mind, alluding to the opening words of the Gospel of John. This is what Valentinus allegedly wrote in the *Gospel of Truth*:

The gospel of truth is joy to those who have received from the Father of truth the gift of knowing him by the power of the Logos, who has come from the Pleroma and who is in the thought and the mind of the Father; he it is who is called 'the Saviour', since that is the name of the work which he must do for the redemption of those who have not known the Father. For the name of the gospel is the manifestation of hope, since that is the discovery of those who seek him, because the All sought him from whom it had come forth. You see, the All had been inside of him, that illimitable, inconceivable One, who is better than every thought.

We have to acknowledge Clement of Alexandria for his spirited descriptions of the teachings of the Early Gnostics, and his audacity to highjack so many papers from the Library of Alexandria when he exiled to Antioch and then to Damascus. Although Clement was originally a Pagan philosopher, he became greatly opposed to the entire Pagan system after getting acquainted with the Gospels. Still, he sought to preserve the Gnostic teachings particularly of Socrates and Plato, of which he wrote as the '*True Gnostics*'. He saw it as his task to clean the air of the '*pollutions*' that the Pagan mythologies with their '*lords many and gods many*' had spread, and became the ethical philosopher of the Christians. To his opinion, the gods of Greece indulged in lust and murder, and the people were shaped by what they worshipped into the same. Thus, Clement sketches in minute detail the transformations to which the heathen must be submitted: '*For with an unsurpassable speed and a benevolence to which we have ready access, the Divine Power hath filled the universe with the seed of salvation.*'

Clement further describes in one of his chapters that '*by divine inspiration philosophers sometimes hit on the truth*'. This he sees particularly true of Plato when he cites from the Timaeus: '*For both to find the Father and Maker of this universe is a work of difficulty; and having found Him, to declare Him fully, is impossible*'. He then urges to proceed further on the track of philosophy, which he sees as the handmaiden of Theology, as follows:

'And let it not be this one man alone - Plato - but, O philosophy, hasten to produce many others also, who declare the only true God to be God, through His inspiration, if in any measure they have grasped the truth. For Antisthenes did not think out this doctrine of the Cynics; but it is in virtue of his being a disciple of Socrates that he says: "that God is not like to any; wherefore no one can know Him from an image." And Xenophon the Athenian would have in his own person committed freely to writing somewhat of the truth, and given the same testimony as Socrates, had he not been afraid of the cup of poison, which Socrates had to drink. But he hints nothing less; he says: "How great and powerful He is who moves all things, and is Himself at rest, is manifest; but what He is in form is not revealed. The sun himself, intended to be the source of light to all around, does not deem it fitting to allow himself to be looked at; but if any one audaciously gazes on him, he is deprived of sight." Whence, then, does the son of Gryllus learn his wisdom? Is it not manifestly from the prophetess of the Hebrews [the Sibyl] who prophesies in the following style?: "What flesh can see with the eye the celestial, the True, the Immortal God, who inhabits the vault of heaven? Nay, men born mortal cannot even stand before the rays of the sun." '

He then touches on a phrase from Pisadeus, the Stoic philosopher (who is likely Asseus, a native of Asso) who first describes the beneficent attributes of God, and then contrastingly that '*Mean is everyone who looks to opinion with the view of obtaining some advantage from it*'. Clement here finds the clue to the nature of God: that common opinion and

religious customs drive their followers towards infamy, and keep them from finding God. He also cites the Pythagoreans:

We must neither keep the Pythagoreans in the background, who say: "God is one; and He is not, as some suppose, outside of this frame of things, but within it; but, in all the entireness of His being, is in the whole circle of existence, surveying all nature, and blending in harmonious union the whole, the author of all His own forces and works, the giver of light in heaven, and Father of all, the mind and vital power of the whole world, the mover of all things." For the knowledge of God, these utterances, written by those we have mentioned through the inspiration of God, and selected by us, may suffice even for the man that has but small power to examine into truth.'

Besides the poets and the prophets, Clement also values the Hebrew prophetess, the *Sibyl*:

Let the Sibyl prophetess, then, be the first to sing to us the song of salvation:

*"So He is all sure and unerring;
Come, follow no longer darkness and gloom;
See, the sun's sweet-glancing light shines gloriously.
Know, and lay up wisdom in your hearts:
There is one God, who sends rains, and winds, and earthquakes,
Thunderbolts, famines, plagues, and dismal sorrows,
And snows and ice. But why detail particulars?
He reigns over heaven, He rules earth, He truly is..."*

where, in remarkable accordance with inspiration she compares delusion to darkness, and the knowledge of God to the sun and light, and subjecting both to comparison, shows the choice we ought to make.'

Thus, the early Christian sects shaped anew the principles of Hermeticism/Platonism into another form of Gnosticism, in which featured very strongly the Gnostic illumination (the purpose of rising from the *sarkic* to the *hylic* state, and then to the *psychic* and finally to the *pneumatic* state), by means of a *Saviour* as later weighed out in the elaborate *Pistis Sophia*.

For our present discourse, however, I would like to lift out of the variegated Christian Gnostic scriptures two short treatises: *The exegesis of the Soul* (from the Nag Hammadi collection) and the *Hymn of the Pearl*, (from the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas*). These bring us closer to the main subject of dualist monism pictured earlier in the Life Cycle, and useful in our upcoming theosophical/scientific discourse.

In the *Exegesis of the Soul*, the soul is pictured as a *virgin* with a *womb*:

Wise men of old gave the soul a feminine name. Indeed she is female in her nature as well. She even has her womb. As long as she was alone with the father, she was virgin and in form androgynous. But when she fell down into a body and came to this life, then she fell into the hands of many robbers. And the wanton creatures passed her from one to another and [defiled] her. Some made use of her by force, while others did so by seducing her with a gift. In short, they defiled her, and she [lost] her virginity.

Clearly, one should not take this text on the literal level, but in a figurative, general sense: it is portraying the bonding of the material world to the spiritual world that spoils the spiritual element in the new-born soul, and she forgets her ‘mission’ in the world. Furthermore, the text says that through turning inward and asking mercy, the soul may yet obtain the virgin state and achieve the ‘real’ wedding:

As long as the soul keeps running about everywhere copulating with whomever she meets and defiling herself, she exists suffering her

just deserts. But when she perceives the straits she is in and weeps before the father and repents, then the father will have mercy on her and he will make her womb turn from the external domain and will turn it again inward, so that the soul will regain her proper character. For it is not so with a woman: For the womb of the body is inside the body like the other internal organs, but the womb of the soul is around the outside like the male genitalia which is external.

So when the womb of the soul, by the will of the father, turns itself inward, it is baptized and is immediately cleansed of the external pollution which was pressed upon it, just as garments, when dirty, are put into the water and turned about until their dirt is removed and they become clean. And so the cleansing of the soul is to regain the newness of her former nature and to turn herself back again. That is her baptism.

The text then deals with the real bridegroom, who she patiently awaits. The continual supplication of the soul to the father and waiting for the redeemer is elaborated more in the *Pistis Sophia*, but our present text summarizes the outcome as follows:

Thus when the soul had adorned herself again in her beauty [she] enjoyed her beloved, and he also loved her. And when she had intercourse with him, she got from him the seed that is the life-giving spirit, so that by him she bears good children and rears them. For this is the great, perfect marvel of birth. And so this marriage is made perfect by the will of the father.

Now it is fitting that the soul regenerates herself and become again as she formerly was. The soul then moves of her own accord. And she received the divine nature from the father for her rejuvenation, so that she might be restored to the place where originally she had been. This is the resurrection that is from the dead. This is the ransom from captivity. This is the upward journey of ascent to heaven. This is the way of ascent to the father.

This allegory of marriage of the true bride and bridegroom we find in the Christian gospels and it became a central theme of Alchemical writings, namely the '*Chemical Marriage*'. That this marriage became depicted in chemical terms is also an important key we must keep in mind when we develop our hypotheses later on.

Another key aspect of the wanderings of the soul, its imprisonment in the material realm and its liberation from it, we find in the '*Hymn of the Pearl*'. This allegory is part of the *Acts of Thomas*, one of the many New Testament Apocrypha, in which Christ is portrayed as a universal '*Heavenly Redeemer*', who is an independent entity that liberates souls from the '*darkness of the world*'. The *Hymn of the Pearl* is part of this, written in the form of a poem, or hymn. It was kept in very high regard by George Mead, who gave a separate account of it in his series '*Echoes from the Gnosis*'^{<25>}. He regarded it as an independent writing possibly by a Bardesanist poet in the second century AD. Due to its importance, I quote the poem in full, slightly adapted with some intermittent comments:

When quite a little child, I was dwelling in the House of my Father's Kingdom, and in the wealth and the glories of my up-bringers I was delighting, [and] from the East, our Home, my Parents sent me forth with provisions for a journey.

Indeed from the wealth of our Treasure, they bound up for me a load. Large was it, yet it was so light that all alone I could bear it. Gold from the Land of Beth-Ellaya, Silver from Gazak the Great, Chalcedonies of India, Iris-hued [Opals?] from Kāshan. They girt me with Adamant [also] that hath power to cut even iron.

My Glorious Robe they took off me, which in their love they had wrought me, and my Purple Mantle [also], which was woven to match with my stature.

The tale thus starts with the adept on his point of departure: the new soul sets out on his journey from the Kingdom of Heaven supplied with his *Talents*, and gets his assignment:

And with me They [then] made a compact; in my heart wrote it, not to forget it: "If thou goest down into Egypt, and thence thou bring'st the one Pearl, [The Pearl] that lies in the Sea, hard by the loud-breathing Serpent, [then] shalt thou put on thy Robe and thy Mantle that goeth upon it, and with thy Brother, Our Second, shalt thou be Heir in our Kingdom."

I left the East and went down with two Couriers [with me], for the way was hard and dangerous, and I was young to tread it. I traversed the borders of Maishan, the mart of the Eastern merchants, and I reached the Land of Babel, and entered the walls of Sarbāg. Down further I went into Egypt; and from me parted my escorts.

Straightway I went to the Serpent; near to his lodging I settled, to take away my Pearl while he should sleep and should slumber. Lone was I there, yea, all lonely; to my fellow-lodgers a stranger. However I saw there a noble, from out of the Dawn-land my kinsman, a young man fair and well favoured, son of Grandees; he came and he joined me.

I made him my chosen companion, a comrade, for sharing my wares with. He warned me against the Egyptians, against mixing with the unclean ones. For I had clothed me as they were, that they might not guess I had come from afar to take off the Pearl, and so rouse the Serpent against me. .

But from some occasion or other they learned I was not of their country. With their wiles they made my acquaintance; Yea, they gave me their victuals to eat. I forgot that I was a King's son, and became a slave to their king. I forgot all concerning the Pearl for which my Parents had sent me; and from the weight of their victuals I sank down into a deep sleep.

At this point, the wandering prince will submit himself to the necessities and temptations of life, and in their superfluity becomes intoxicated by them, falling asleep, losing his memory of the Kingdom and his purpose of the journey. However, the Kingdom comes to his aid:

All this that now was befalling, my Parents perceived and were anxious. It was then proclaimed in our Kingdom, that all should speed to our Gate -- Kings and Chieftains of Parthia, and of the East all the Princes. And this is the counsel they came to: I should not be left down in Egypt. And for me they wrote out a Letter; and to it each Noble his Name set:

"From Us -- King of Kings, thy Father, and thy Mother, Queen of the Dawn-land, and from Our Second, thy Brother -- To thee, Son, down in Egypt, Our Greeting! Up and arise from thy sleep, give ear to the words of Our Letter! Remember that thou art a King's son; see whom thou hast served in thy slavedom. Bethink thyself of the Pearl for which thou didst journey to Egypt. Remember thy Glorious Robe, Thy Splendid Mantle remember, to put on and wear as adornment, when thy Name may be read in the Book of the Heroes, and with Our Successor, thy Brother, thou mayest be Heir in Our Kingdom."

My Letter was [surely] a Letter the King had sealed up with His Right Hand, against the Children of Babel, the wicked, the tyrannical Daimons of Sarbag. It flew in the form of the Eagle, of all the winged tribes the king-bird; it flew and alighted beside me, and turned into speech altogether.

At its voice and the sound of its winging, I waked and arose from my deep sleep. Unto me I took it and kissed it; I loosed its seal and I read it. Even as it stood in my heart writ, the words of my Letter were written.

The letter comes in the form of the Eagle, the symbol of the Highest Spirit, which awakes the adept from his sleep. As

further explained by George Mead, a set of meanings can be attributed to the symbol of the Eagle: (1) it is the *highest rank* in the *Mithraic order*, (2) it is alike the *Dove* as the symbol of the *Holy Spirit*, or the divine breath (*Atman*) in the Christian Gospels, or (3) it is in the Buddhic sense the *Quintessence* or *One Element*, the *Æther*, or the *Shining One*, (4) it is in Sanskrit *Akhasha*, the *Very Shining One*, with its prime characteristic of ‘sound’, and (5) it is in the Rabbinical literature called *Bath-Kol*, which is the *Voice from Heaven* or the *Daughter of the Voice*, the *Echo of the Word or Name*. These are important connotations in our upcoming discourse on interactions of waveforms and elemental strings.

I remembered that I was a King's son, and my rank did long for its nature. I bethought me again of the Pearl, for which I was sent down to Egypt, and I began [then] to charm him, the terrible loud-breathing Serpent. I lulled him to sleep and to slumber, chanting over him the Name of my Father, the Name of our Second, [my Brother], and [Name] of my Mother, the East-Queen.

And [thereon] I snatched up the Pearl, and turned to the House of my Father. Their filthy and unclean garments I stripped off and left in their country. To the way that I came I betook me, to the Light of our Home, to the Dawn-land. On the road I found [there] before me, my Letter that had aroused me -- as with its voice it had roused me, so now with its light it did lead me -- on fabric of silk, in letter of red, with shining appearance before me, encouraging me with its guidance, with its love it was drawing me onward.

I went forth; through Sarbāg I passed; I left Babel-land on my left hand; and I reached unto Maishan the Great, the meeting-place of the merchants, that lieth hard by the Sea-shore. My Glorious Robe that I'd stripped off, and my Mantle with which it was covered, down from the Heights of Hyrcania, thither my Parents did send me, by the hands of their Treasure-dispensers who trustworthy were with it trusted.

Now, the adept who has been out of his homeland (the spiritual state) returns to the glory of his Fathers' house, which appears to be the *Image of the Self*:

Without my recalling its fashion, -- in the House of my Father my childhood had left it, -- at once, as soon as I saw it, the Glory looked like my own self. I saw it in all of me, and saw me all in [all off] it, -- that we were twain in distinction, and yet again one in one likeness. I saw, too, the Treasurers also, who unto me had brought it down, were twain [and yet] of one likeness; for one Sign of the King was upon them -- who through them restored me the Glory, the Pledge of my Kingship.

The Glorious Robe all-bespangled with sparkling splendour of colours: with Gold and also with Beryls, Chalcedonies, iris-hued [Opals?], with Sards of varying colours. To match its grandeur, moreover, it had been completed: with adamantine jewels all of its seams were off-fastened. Moreover] the King of Kings' Image was depicted entirely all o'er it; and as with Sapphires above was it wrought in a motley of colour.

I saw that moreover all o'er it the motions of Gnosis abounding; I saw it further was making ready as though for to speak. I heard the sound of its Music, which it whispered as it descended: "Behold him the active in deeds! For whom I was reared with my Father; I too have felt in myself how that with his works waxed my stature."

And [now] with its Kingly motions was it pouring itself out towards me, and made haste in the hands of its Givers, that I might [take and] receive it. And me, too, my love urged forward to run for to meet it, to take it. And I stretched myself forth to receive it; with its beauty of colour I decked me, and my Mantle of sparkling colours I wrapped entirely all over me.

I clothed me therewith, and ascended to the Gate of Greeting and Homage. I bowed my head and praised the Glory of Him who sent

it, whose commands I had accomplished, and who had, too, done what He'd promised. [And there] at the Gate of His House-sons I mingled myself with His Princes; for He had received me with gladness, and I was with Him in His Kingdom; to whom the whole of His Servants with sweet-sounding voices sing praises.

He had promised that with him out to the Court of the King of Kings I should speed, and taking with me my Pearl should with him be seen by our King.

The themes of the two former writings are arguably the two pillars onto which all subsequent writings of the Alchemists and Rosicrucians are based. Alchemy proper started with the writings (visions) of Zosimos, and the art first flourished in Persia, before becoming adopted in the West. (The name Alchemy is derived from the Persian word *Al-Khimya*.) With exception of our earlier example of Democritus, the ancient Greek and Egyptian alchemists were moreover allegorical and unintelligible in their writings, and had very little concern for laboratory work, but via Zosimos we arrive at the end of the 8th century with the Persian philosopher *Jābir ibn Hayyān* who introduced a form of experimental Alchemy that was already much closer to the present scientific experimentation practises in the laboratory. Thus, Jābir can be considered to be the *Father of Chemistry*. The launch of Alchemy in Europe came in 1144 with the translation by Robert of Chester of the Persian *Book of the Composition of Alchemy*. The Alchemists in Western Europe associated the mental states into chemical elements: salt, the lowest material (earth) state, sulphur, the state of the soul/mind (air) and mercury, the spiritual state (fire). Their transformations were pictured in the *Opus Magnum*, comprising in its most elementary form the *nigredo* (blackening), the *albedo* (whitening), the *citrinitas* (yellowing), and the *rubedo* (reddening).

The history of Alchemy I must leave outside the boundaries of this inquiry, and here proceed to the transformation of Alchemy into the *Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, which occurred between 1607 and 1616 when two anonymous manifestos were published: the *Fama Fraternitatis R.C.* and the *Confessio Fraternitatis R.C.* These documents alluded to the presence of ‘*a most laudable Order*’ of philosophers that promoted a ‘*Universal Reformation of Mankind*’. The first known exponents of the movement, which opposed the dogmatism of the Roman Catholic Church, were the philosopher/alchemy Heinrich Khunrath, Michael Maier, Robert Fludd, Johann Valentin Andreae and Thomas Vaughan. We must note that in a later stage the Rosicrucian movement strongly influenced the emergence of Freemasonry in Scotland.

Rosicrucianism was, before all, a novel amalgamation of Alchemical and Christian Gnostic concepts, and the members of the movement wrote many treatises in the form of parables. The most important among these was the third ‘Manifesto’: *The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz*, likely written by Johann Valentin Andreae. In this work, allegories are presented related to the unity of the exoteric and esoteric realms. Again the travel to a far country, the alchemical depiction of the higher spiritual realm, and the illicit inspection of the bridal chamber (sepulchre of Venus) are central in this allegory. The text seems to be based also on two phrases from the Bible: ‘*The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment*’ (Matthew 22:2,11), and ‘*I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*’ (Revelation 21:2). In concordance with their rules, the Rosicrucian adepts of the various ages travelled a lot, and reported on their findings in different countries to the

brotherhood. This is well known for the first member Christian Rosenkreutz himself, but also for the later-day Rosicrucians, such as the Comte de Chazal, the Comte de St. Germain and Sigismund Backstrom. At the same time, the central meeting place of the Rosicrucians also moved through history. It started in Damascus, and presently it is situated in Malême, Crete.

The Enlightenment and the Rise of Science

With the Rosicrucians we are now entering into the phase that brought all the Gnostic movements together into what is called Theosophy. The theosophical literature arguably started with the encyclopaedic treatise of Georg von Welling, the '*Opus Mago-Cabbalisticum et Theosophicum*' (1721, 1735) which should still be considered as a work of Alchemy, onto which various canonical and apocryphal (occult) Judaic and Christian biblical teachings have been strung up. This work was influential in the later part of the 18th century, but did not radiate out much further than the German-speaking circles. Particularly Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was acquainted with this work, and some even claim that Johann Sebastian Bach had read an early copy. More surprisingly, this work has not yet been translated into the English language until the present day.

With Goethe we already see the rise of a new enlightenment in Germany, in which art, religion, philosophy and science, first united, became separated into distinct disciplines. This separation was caused by the huge increase in knowledge of the natural world, forcing specialisation. The enlightenment, with its insistence on rationality, soon sought to effectively separate esoteric subjects from exoteric subjects, astronomy from astrology, theology from theosophy, natural science from psychological science, etc. The days of Newton and Goethe, both very enthusiastic alchemists, were soon over and exoteric and esoteric subjects were deemed to be too distant to fit into a

single head, some of them too lofty to fit into any head. That this process was necessary at the time is understandable, but, as we have seen, it has led in our time to a positivist materialism that has become over-dogmatic in itself and cannot reconcile the mental with the material world. Already the attempt to fit into a single mathematical framework the whole universe is a good sign of this dogmatism. Although the theory of strings may have a certain advantage of being able to represent the mental/spiritual realms, as I later hope to show, to try to ‘model’ the universe entirely is a vain exercise.

This forces us to return a while to the *Enlightenment*, which followed the Rosicrucian era and rerouted it into the direction of Theosophy. Starting most prominently in Scotland at the beginning of the 18th century as a philosophical movement which soon conquered the whole of Europe and America, the Enlightenment posed rationality as the basis of legitimate thought, and advanced the ideals of liberty, tolerance, fraternity and constitutional government. It sought to end the abuses of the church and state. Characteristic of the Scottish Enlightenment, which reflects today in its independent system of law, is the rejection of authority that cannot be justified by reason. Due to its high esteem, the Scottish enlightenment had effects far beyond Scotland, such as in Holland (in the person of Pieter Teyler van der Hulst, the founder of the Teyler’s Museum), in America (via the Scottish diaspora, and through the many students who studied in Scotland), in France (Jean-Jacques Rousseau), and in Britain it lingered 50 years longer after its decline in Scotland. An important figure in the spreading of the enlightenment was the count of St. Germain, about whom we will discuss at a later stage. The rise of science was a further outcome for the pursuit of “truth”, and it was a force that could grow virtually without inhibition. As a counter-reaction to the overly rational, reductionist tendencies, the spirit of Gnosticism

was subdued, and once more the gate was opened for underground esoteric movements, such as the Illuminati in Bavaria, and various new forms of freemasonry, which spread in the years 1725-1750, such as the first Grand Lodge (London, 1717), the Scottish Rite, and the many others. The word *Theosophy* became much more widespread also in this period, as evidenced by the earlier mentioned writings of von Welling and other prevalently German mystics, such as Johann Gichtel (1638-1710), Andreas Freher (1649-1728), Samuel Richter (1655-1727), Gottfried Arnold (1666-1714), William Law (1686-1761), Johann Brucker (1696-1770) and Friedrich Oetinger (1702-1782).

In the period of the 18th century the dissemination of ideas was very strongly growing and diversifying: there was literally a reading boom from 1750 to 1800 during which small printing firms blossomed (e.g. the *Bibliothèque Bleue*), and new magazines and pamphlets were issued (*Libelles*, *The Gentleman's Magazine*, *Le Gazetier cuirassé*). Besides the institutionalized publishers, there came into being a whole array of "Grub Street" issuers. The first encyclopaedia was compiled by Denis Diderot. Also the first dictionaries were printed. Scientific and literary journals started. Discourses were held in the salons and particularly in the coffee-shops. The first Theosophical Society - so named - was established in England by Robert Hindmarsh, largely for disseminating the writings of Emmanuel Swedenborg, which are of intermediary importance to our discourse. In fact, we may view the Swede as the most important enlightener of this period, as he wrote of the spiritual and the natural worlds with great transparency. In his treatise on the *Interaction of the Soul and Body* he writes^{<26>}:

"Lest therefore from ignorance of that world, and the uncertain faith concerning heaven and hell resulting from it, man should be infatuated to such a degree as to become an atheistic naturalist, it has pleased the Lord to open the sight of my spirit, and to elevate it into heaven, and also to

let it down into hell, and to present to view the quality of both. Thence it has thus been manifested to me that there are two worlds, which are distinct from each other; one in which all things are spiritual, which is therefore called the spiritual world, and the other in which all things are natural, and thence is called the natural world; and that spirits and angels live in their own world, and men in theirs; and also that every man passes by death from his own world into the other, and in this he lives to eternity. A knowledge of both of these worlds must be given first, in order that influx, which is here treated of, may be disclosed from its beginning; for the spiritual world flows into the natural world, and actuates it in all its parts, both with men and with beasts, and also constitutes the vegetative activity in trees and herbs.

The spiritual world existed and subsists from its own sun, and the natural world from its own sun. That there is one sun of the spiritual world and another of the natural world is because those worlds are altogether distinct and a world derives its origin from its sun, for a world in which all things are spiritual cannot arise from a sun all things from which are natural, for thus there would be physical influx, which however is contrary to order. That the world existed from the sun, and not the reverse, is manifest from the effect of the cause, namely, that the world, in each and every part subsists by means of the sun; and subsistence demonstrates existence, wherefore it is said that subsistence is perpetual existence; from which it is evident, that if the sun were removed, its world would fall into chaos, and this chaos into nothing.

The points raised by the later theosophists, moreover, build on these direct revelations of Swedenborg. Additionally, we can show via multidimensional wave theory that the natural (material) world and the spiritual world are equally real, although distinct in their own level. However, they do interact, and energy will flow from the spiritual world into the natural world due to *wave-coupling*. It might explain why often a “great light” accompanies the summons from the higher world down to our world. Evidently, not only Saul of Tarsus, but also other

men have trod the Road to Damascus and found enlightenment, but the divine spirit can be found in the simple formulation of the term modifying the quantum potential, which appears as higher-dimensional variables in the second derivative of the wave function. Swedenborg's statement that *the world in which all things are spiritual cannot arise from a sun all things from which are natural*, rather indicates a dualistic standpoint. One additional viewpoint by Swedenborg concerns the "Esse" ('the essence of God'):

"Let us first consider the Divine Esse, and afterwards the Divine essence. In appearance the two are one and the same; but esse is more universal than essence; for essence implies esse, and is derived from esse. The Esse of God (or the Divine Esse) it is impossible to define, because it transcends every idea of human thought, since this can take in only what is created and finite, and not what is uncreated and infinite, and therefore not the Divine Esse. The Divine Esse is Esse itself, from which all things are, and which must be in all things in order that they may have being. A fuller conception of the Divine Esse may be gained by the following propositions: (1) The one God is called Jehovah from Esse, that is because He alone Is, Was, and Is To Be, and because He is the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and the Omega. (2) The one God is substance itself and Form itself, and angels and men are substances and forms from Him, and so far as they are in Him and He is in them are images and likenesses of Him. (3) The Divine Esse is at once Esse [Being] in itself and Existere [Manifestation] in itself. (4) It is impossible for the Divine Esse and Existere in itself to produce another Divine which is Esse and Existere in itself; therefore another God of the same Essence is impossible. (5) The doctrine of a plurality of gods, both in past ages and at the present day, sprang solely from a failure to understand the Divine Esse."

It is, of course, necessary to further explain this pronouncement in order to reconcile this type of dogma with reason, without

getting into the hair-splitting that puts askew our earlier notions about the Pleroma and the three-tiered structure of the universe, which can be represented by a rather simple scheme.

In the later phase of the *Siecle des Lumières*, after Swedenborg, there arose an increased questioning of religious orthodoxy, but at the same time, a re-interpretation of biblical and religious texts was undertaken. A great force in this endeavour was Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) who tried to reconcile rationalism and religious beliefs, individual freedom and political authority, and the limits of reason. Along with these developments there were linked the unavoidable religious wars in Scotland: the continuing rebellions by the Covenanters lasting till 1652 and the Cameronians till 1680, which were followed by the Jacobite risings which drastically ended in the battle at Culloden in 1746. From this the Enlightenment in Scotland partly took its leave. In Scotland new religious movements during the Enlightenment included the Methodists and the Glassites (Sandemanians). To the latter belonged the scholar and later-day Rosicrucian Alexander Tilloch, who was an active agent in the religious sphere and had his own printing office. He published a remarkable essay on the Apocalypse.

In France the enlightenment gave rise to the French revolution, which replaced the monarchy with a republican liberal democracy. However, it did not end the political turmoil, which finally gave rise to the Napoleonic dictatorship. In these circumstances, religious movements were hard pressed (*the Reign of Terror*), and social insecurity abounded, which later paved the way for the Romantic Era.

In this environment operated secretly behind the scenes the brotherhood of the count of St. Germain. The Comte himself was present at nearly all memorable events, from the Illuminati in Bavaria, to the French Revolution at which time he disappeared into oblivion.

4. Quanta and Strings

Occult Chemistry



THE search for a rudimentary form of string theory, brought the present apprentice on the track of the Theosophical Society, and the publications in their magazine *Lucifer*, released since 1887. In one of its issues of the year 1895 a preliminary report appeared of *clairvoyant observation* of subatomic structures entitled “*Occult Chemistry*” by Annie Besant^{<27>}. The study stood out by its, for that time, unusual audacity. It may indeed be considered as a rudimentary form of string theory, introduced at a time when the smallest indivisible atom was still considered to be the hydrogen nucleus. The early article was the start of a research project by the Theosophists Annie Besant and Charles Leadbeater and some others that lasted until 1950, when a final edition on this subject was published^{<28>}. The treatise of 1895 concerned the occult observation of hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen “gaseous” atoms, and identified a primary particle “*Anu*” present in two kinds: positive/male (p) and negative/female (n), and they were arranged in groups of three: ppn and pnn. In hydrogen 18 *Anu* particles make up six larger units which are bound to each other in groups of three (Fig. 1.A). This clearly foreshadows the presently known quark structure (Fig. 1.B), but deviates from it unless one proposes that the observation must have been of the hydrogen molecule (H_2) and not of the lone hydrogen nucleus. The arrangement of particles is somewhat reminiscent of the Rishon (or Preon) model proposed independently by Harari and Shupe in 1979, in which they described arrangements of V (*Vohu*) and T (*Tohu*) particles in triplets, such as VVT and VTT^{<29,30>}. The *Anu* particles, however, were clearly pictured as *strings* of a somewhat complex shape, like Lissajous figures in three dimensions (Figure 2).

The following pictures are merely intended for showing the striking similarity between the occult and the scientific model:

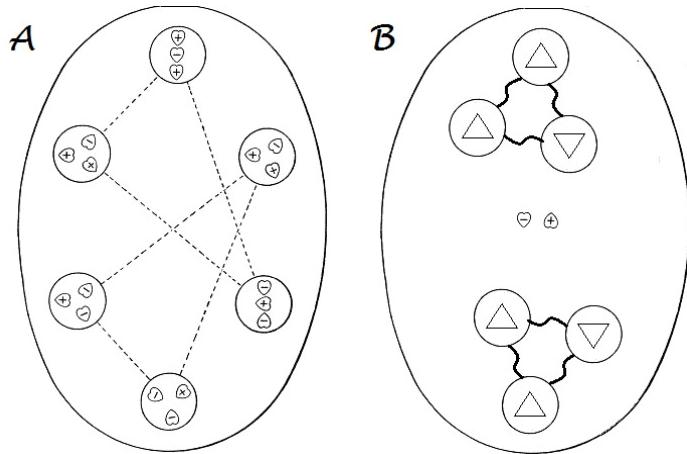


Figure 1. (A) Hydrogen structure according to the Occult Chemistry, consisting of 18 primary "Anu" particles, (B) the present structure as represented by up- and down-quarks, here represented with two additional string-like particles: two spin-coupled electrons.

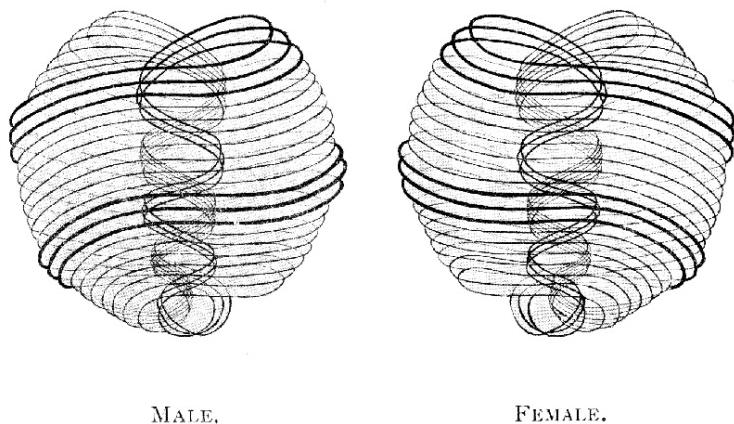


Figure 2. The Anu: the first "observed" string.

When we further attempt to scrutinize Him on the sources of His knowledge, we see that our “*Clairvoyant Observer*” unveiled an even more striking correspondence to the modern theories: the string-like properties of the *Anu* particles are supplemented by two other properties, one of which was unknown at the time: the property of *spin*. To cite from Annie Besant as she wrote about this in 1895^{<27>}:

“These four etheric substates will be best understood if the method be explained by which they were studied. This method consisted of taking what is called an atom of a gas, and breaking it up time after time, until what proved to be the ultimate physical atom [Anu] was reached, the breaking up of this last resulting in the production of astral, and no longer of physical, matter...”

*The ultimate atom, which is the same in all the observed cases, is an exceedingly complex body, and only its main characteristics are given in the diagram. It is composed entirely of spirals, the spiral being in its turn composed of spirillae, and these again of minuter spirillae. A fairly accurate drawing is given in Babbitt’s *Principles of Light and Colour*, p. 102. The illustrations there given of atomic combinations are entirely wrong and misleading, but if the stove-pipe run through the centre of the single atom be removed, the picture may be taken as correct, and will give some idea of the complexity of this fundamental unit of the physical universe.*

Turning to the force-side of the atom and its combinations, we observe that force pours into the heart-shaped depression at the top of the atom, and issues from the point, and is changed in character by its passage; further, force rushes through every spiral and every spirilla, and the changing shades of colour that flash out from the rapidly revolving and vibrating atom depend on the several activities of the spirals; sometimes one, sometimes another, is thrown into more energetic action, and with the change of activity from one spiral to another the colour changes.

It seems our clairvoyant observers did not eschew revealing their initial source: apparently the *Anu* was earlier introduced by Edwin Babbitt in “*The Principles of Light and Colour*”^{<31>}, posing the concept of a hidden structure of the atom. Still, we must acknowledge that the theosophists notably refined Babbitt’s picture, even to a faint notion of “chromodynamics”. Initially, Babbitt in his treatise suggested the ultimate atom as an attempt to reconcile the opposite views of spiritual and material aspects of the atom^{<31>}:

“We have seen the folly of these extreme positions in the last chapter, and having learned that everything possesses a finer positive principle, and a coarser negative principle, we may confidently presume that each atom has its imperishable framework, with the definiteness of position, which is supposed to belong to materiality, and yet an inconceivable exquisiteness, elasticity and spirit-like freedom and flow of force.”

A striking intuition of Babbitt was that his ‘strings’ were seen as a “spirals-within-spirals” structure (Fig. 3), as with the wrapped-up dimensions of String Theory. To this model we will return later in this thesis, particularly the ‘substates’ of the atom.

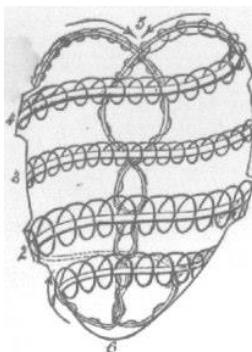


Figure 3. Babbitt’s atom fine-structure as Extra Spirals and Intra-Spirals (from Ref 31).

New insights on the ‘aether’ feature among the many concepts in the later edition of Occult Chemistry, to which the theosophists referred to as ‘Koilon’. They considered it as a refinement of the Mùlaprakriti (mother-matter), having a tremendous density at small scales in which matter appears rather as bubbles than as dense particles. Its semblance to the modern ‘zero point energy’ is striking. Two related theosophical concepts are that of an “*Infinite Sphere of Light*” and the ‘universal breath’, quoting George Mead^{<24>}:

“There is ever a something going, as it were from and to its centre, which is everywhere and nowhere, a breath ever outbreathing and inbreathing, an endless energy which nothing human can perceive or know. It is the Life-breath of the universe at the zero-point of being, to use terms familiar to some theosophical students.”

Did he have in mind here that in the largest and smallest scales, the universe pulsates like a heart, is even heart-shaped, like Babbitt’s atom? It is there in small scale, within the atoms, but also on the largest scale in local universes, inflating, deflating. Mead goes on as follows:

“We next proceed to what we must call a change of state; but we should remember that all the states we are attempting thus to symbolize, in reality exist simultaneously; and though in thought we are to follow out a kind of emanation or evolution, it is in reality an ever-existing infinite state of consciousness out of time and space. In this ever-pulsating field of universal energy (which is everywhere and nowhere), a something arises slightly less brilliant than the Transcendent Light, another mode of motion as it were, which we may symbolize as an oval or egg-like swirling, ever swelling-out and in-drawing. Within this two ‘foci’ are gradually developed, as it pulsates and swells. The inner periphery of the egg-envelope contracts in the midst through the action of the two foci, the symbols of equilibrium, of positive and negative, the law of syzygy or pairing. The two part asunder.

Bythus and Ennéa, Profoundity and Thought, the first syzygy of aons, are now symbolized as two spheres. Being separate, in some mysterious fashion they are differently affected by the great out-breath and in-breath, yet each manifests the qualities of the other. One is positive, the other is negative, as it were, and these qualities are at once communicated to the whole of the great Light-sphere, for they are everywhere and nowhere at once. Polarity is thus stated to be a mode of being of the Pleroma; the law of syzygy is affirmed.

So, what is the theosophical link to the theory of strings? The sequence of logic, treated later in more detail, is as follows:

1. It is virtually impossible to regard matter just as matter and spirit just as spirit, in the sense that they are able to have a conscious existence on themselves. The spirit needs matter to emanate, matter needs spirit to evolve from chaos to order and life. So, spirit and matter must be seen as two fundamentally complementary aspects of reality embedded in the fullness of the *Pleroma*.
2. The two realms need to be coupled to each other via a dynamic balance of forces (the “inbreathing” and “out-breathing”). The spirit seeks to expand into matter, while matter absorbs the spirit to its own purpose of order. One could state that both realms have a form of ‘intelligence’, which they both recognise from each other, still always they seek to balance their preponderance. This intelligence is *Mind/Soul*, which is emergent from matter and spirit.
3. The coupling needs a combination of two factors: (1) a certain amount of shared dimensions, (2) an appropriate field, allowing the flow of energy and information between the domains of spirit and matter *via* the mind/soul.
4. This energy flow can only be transmitted through ‘complex wave forms’, as described in quantum or string mechanics, but in multiple dimensions yet of a more intrinsic nature.

That these energy flows are very rich in their emanated forms in sentient living beings, yet are very subtle and remain hidden mostly from our direct observation, should be indubitable. As we will see later, these concepts can be refined and to a limited degree and made more concrete. It was clearly along these lines of thought that some of the Gnostic thinkers were seeking for a '*living symbolism*', which would moreover be an outline for the universal order and dynamics, for which they used the concept of the *Æons*. Again quoting from George Mead^{<24>}:

'From the region of definite polyhedral matter, the ordering of which, though invisible to the eye, could yet be imagined in the mind, the symbolism could be pushed back a further stage--from the molecular to the atomic as we should say nowadays. The regular solids were thus the eventuation in physical matter of certain systems of perfect equilibrium of 'points' in space. These points were not pure mathematical abstractions, but actual centres of force, bearing certain relations to one another, equilibrated by a law of polarity or syzygy. This was the region of the atom. The atom was thought of as a living thing of force, a sphere, said by some to be a spherical ('conical') swirl, the most perfect figure, ever contracting and expanding, generative of all motions, while it is itself self-motive, and yet from another point of view 'immovable', as pertaining to the 'foundations of earth'. It is smaller than the small as matter, yet greater than the great as energy.'

'It was the atom and its combinations, then, as we should nowadays say, which the Valentinian Gnosis envisaged in its Æonology. I do not, however, for a moment suggest that any Gnostic philosopher thought of the atom in the same way as a modern physicist does; I believe, on the contrary, that the most advanced of the Gnostics were shown this living symbol of world-formation in a vision, and the various systems were efforts to explain such visions.'

Clearly we can easily confirm his thesis up to this point, but how to make the *vision* more concrete. This is what we should consider next.

The Structure of Matter

It was for the present apprentice a true challenge to get acquainted with the theoretical concepts of quantum theory, and to learn a bit about the *Theory of Strings*, as it is presented today in the popular literature. Many scholars of today, at the beginning of the 1990's, regard string theory as a promising framework to earlier prevalent theories around the *Standard Model*, which was finalized in the mid-1970s upon experimental confirmation of the existence of quarks. An overall good starting point was the popular book of Steven Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* ^{<32>}, which has a short chapter on the standard model. Presently, the elementary particles that make up the universe have been grouped in three principle types: *quarks*, *leptons* and *bosons*. All these particles are classified according to three fundamental properties: Mass (=energy), electric charge and (magnetic) spin. There is a great variety of composite particles of quarks and leptons, and the bosons are the ones that are the actual carriers of the three known *fields*: the *electromagnetic*, the *weak nuclear* and the *strong nuclear* interactions. The only missing pieces today that still need confirmation are the so-called *top quark* and the *tau neutrino*. Unfortunately, the theory does not account for the phenomenon of *gravitation* as described by Einstein's theory of general relativity, which is also considered to be a field, and must be carried by gravitons of the boson type, as proposed by, among others, Peter Higgs in 1964 ^{<33>}. There are also anti-particles of each of the elementary particles. Most importantly, quarks and leptons come in three generations: there are three distinct groups of particles of increasing mass-energy. The lowest energy particles comprise the *up-* and *down-quarks* and the *electron*.

All these theories have grown as further expansions and generalisations out of the concepts of quantum mechanics as

initially formulated by Erwin Schrödinger, which he later expanded with Werner Heisenberg into the *matrix mechanics* formulation as scientists presently use it for modelling our reality. The accuracy of this mathematical framework has proven to be stunningly high. However, the theory is fraught with some difficulties: (1) it can only be applied to rather small systems and becomes intractable already for larger molecular systems, (2) it has some weird properties that were initially seen as paradoxical, and nowadays are still difficult to understand, and (3) it is still a matter of dispute what influence observations have on the wave function, and what causes it to ‘collapse’ into a stable, observable state. This leads us back to Bohm’s theories about hidden variables in the quantum theory^{<34>}.

Main tenets of quantum theory

Quantum theory poses that^{<34>}:

1. all physical processes can be calculated by considering them to be solutions to an *Eigenfunction*, where the measured result (such as the Energy E) is the *Eigenvalue* associated with a *Hermitian operator* (\hat{H}) acting on a *wave function* Ψ .

$$\hat{H}\Psi = E\Psi, \text{ where } \hat{H} = \left[\frac{-\hbar^2}{2m} \nabla^2 + V \right] \quad (\text{Eq. II.A})$$

The Hermitian operator represents the measurement system and the eigenvalue the result of the measurement.

2. All phenomena can be expressed in the form of the wave function Ψ in multiple orthogonal dimensions as a linear combination of constituent wave functions (ψ):

$$\Psi = \sum_n C_n \psi_n \quad (\text{Eq. II.B})$$

3. The *probability* of finding the system in the state corresponding to the n -th *Eigenvalue* is $|C_n|^2$, that is the square of the modulus (intensity) of the n -th *Eigenvalue*.

Thus, the enigma of quantum theory resides in the probabilistic treatment of physical phenomena, which are basically seen as an indeterminism on account of all the possible *Eigenvalues* the system can assume under observation. The time-dependent wave equation was derived as:

$$\hat{H}\Psi = i\hbar \frac{\partial\Psi}{\partial t} \quad (\text{Eq. II.C})$$

This has much in common with other wave equations, (such as that of the ‘*string*’ in equation I.A) where a differential equation relates wave propagation in space with its time evolution. The equation itself is also clearly looped, reminiscent of Hofstadter’s ‘*strange loops*’.

Bohm proposed a hidden variables interpretation of the wave function by introducing the following general expression for the wave function^{<35>}:

$$\psi = Re^{iS/\hbar} \quad (\text{Eq. III})$$

where R is the *amplitude* and S the *action* both being real functions in space and time. The action is known from Newtonian mechanics and related to the momentum p as: $p = mv = \nabla S$. By substituting equation III into the time-dependent Schrödinger equation II.C, it was shown that it can be split in a real and an imaginary part (see: Addendum A). The real part of the equation is:

$$\frac{\partial S}{\partial t} = \frac{-(\nabla S)^2}{2m} - V + Q, \text{ where } Q = \frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \frac{\nabla^2 R}{R} \quad (\text{Eq. IV})$$

This equation is similar to the Hamilton-Jacobi equation for classical Newtonian motion with an additional term Q , which Bohm designated the *quantum potential*. It is clearly non-local, and effective only when there is a strong spatial curvature of the wave amplitude R . This conversion trick with the Schrödinger equation gives evidence of the Aristotelian ‘*unmoved mover*’. Applied to a game of billiards, the realisation of the action S in

the macroscopic world is typically played with a smooth billiards table where the balls preserve their energy and momentum in their collisions, while being slowed down by friction with the cloth. On the nanoscale, however, particles will move under the influence of an additional potential Q that actively deforms the shape of the (miniature) billiards table with the effect that the movement of the balls becomes more complex. Undoubtedly, the miniature billiards player will have the greatest difficulty in predicting the movement of the balls when his table is warped and when the shape of his table depends on his own position and that of his cue. The Bohmian interpretation has been shown to be equivalent with the Copenhagen interpretation^{<35>}. One may examine if the Schrödinger equation derived in a different way might reveal something of a '*Prime Mover*'.

The Theory of Strings

It has been shown that elementary particles are not indestructible, but they interact and can be transformed into each other. Thus, a particle cannot be seen as a solid point, but rather as a large concentration of energy in a very small space, capable of energy exchange. Some particles cannot even be adequately traced in space and time. An electron moreover is seen as a '*cloud*' that is '*smeared out*' around the molecules. This observation made scientists consider particles to be better represented as waves, and that the space they occupy depends on their state in the surrounding whole. Although string theory is an expansion of quantum theory, it is deemed impossible to make observations of strings on the scale at which they exist, apart from our able occultists. They proposed magnetic interactions between the Anu's in chains in various ways to give rise to *hyper-meta-proto-elemental* (or '*Ei*') matter, which resemble sub-quark structures.

String theory forwards the idea that the point-like particles of elementary physics can be described as one-dimensional *strings* vibrating in a multidimensional space. Thus, string theory describes how strings propagate through space and interact with each other. In the present versions of string theory (there are presently 5 of them), strings look like small rubber bands, either open-ended or closed loop (Fig. 4.a) and they can vibrate in different modes. On a scale larger than the string scale, it looks like a particle, having a mass, charge, and spin determined by the vibrational state of the string. In this way, all elementary particles may be pictured as vibrating strings. So, in one of the vibrational states the string is in the guise of an electron and in another vibrational state it assumes the properties of a quark or a neutrino. One motivation to use strings originated in the use of Feynman diagrams to describe interactions between particles, which were earlier characterized by unrealistic discontinuities (Fig 4.b). By using strings, the interactions could be pictured as a continuous mixing process of strings, such as shown in a simple scattering process (Fig 4.c).

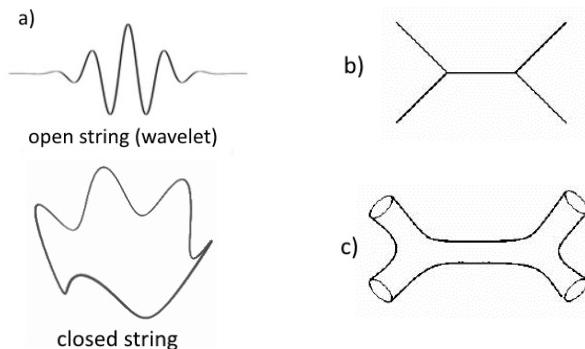


Figure 4. (a) The two concepts of strings. (b) A Feynmann diagram representing the scattering of two different particles. (c) the same represented in string form. Note that the vertical axis is that of space and the horizontal axis that of time.

For the layman, who has the poorest understanding of these modern theories, as also the present writer, it is quite intractable to go into detail about the mathematical framework of string theory that exists at the time of writing of this thesis, and there are presently five different versions of them. To describe quantum strings, we have to return to the description of a classical string: the relation of Equation I.A can be written in the Hamiltonian form as follows:

$$H = \left[-\frac{m}{2} \left(\frac{\partial x}{\partial t} \right)^2 + \frac{k}{2} (\nabla x)^2 \right] \quad (\text{Eq. V})$$

where k is Hooke's constant (with $T = kL$). Comparing this with the Hamiltonian of the time-independent Schrödinger equation:

$$H = \left[\frac{-\hbar^2}{2m} \nabla^2 + V(x) \right] \quad (\text{Eq. II.C})$$

we see that in both cases, the left side of the Hamiltonian represents the kinetic energy and the right side the potential energy. Thus, it is tempting to write the potential energy in terms of a string tension. On the Plank scale ($\hbar=1$, $c=1$) the string Hamiltonian is written in the form:

$$H = \frac{1}{2} \int_0^\pi \left[\left(\frac{\partial x(\sigma)}{\partial t} \right)^2 + \left(\frac{\partial x}{\partial \sigma} \right)^2 \right] d\sigma \quad (\text{Eq. VI.A})$$

where σ is a running variable over the length of the string ($\int (\partial x / \partial \sigma) d\sigma = L$). On this small scale, the rest mass of the string is set equal to its length, and the energy of the string is quantised in a similar way as a classical string:

$$E = nm^2 = nL^2 \quad (\text{Eq. VI.B})$$

where $n=0, 1, 2, 3 \dots$ The quantum steps in angular momentum are always related to the *square* of the mass of the string/particle, which matches the experimentally determined

energy dependence of the excited states of mesons and baryons, but particularly of the anticipated graviton, the elementary particle that mediates the force of gravity.

Chemistry, Life and Creation

In relation to this subject it is appropriate to review a few concepts of the material world as related to *Life* and *Creation*. Of these, the process of creation has still received very little comprehension in scientific circles due to the restrictions of the scientific method ('Occam's razor' and the demand for reproducibility) and limitations in the understanding of chance in (practically) infinite space-time. In his classical textbook on Quantum Theory, Bohm expressed the replacement of classical concepts of physics by a system of quantum concepts in which one should assume an incomplete continuity, incomplete determinism and an indivisible unity of the universe^{<34>}:

'These may be summarized by saying [that] the properties of matter are to be expressed in terms of opposing but complementary pairs of potentialities, either of which can be realized in a more definitive form in an appropriate environment but only at the expense of a corresponding loss in the degree of definition of the other.'

This definition of complementarity has a very important parallel in the Theosophical realm, particularly where the mind and spirit is concerned as opposed to matter (the '*Mind over Matter*' debate). Related to the Quantum Theory, however, there is the unrelenting debate on the completeness of the quantum theory, and particularly the possibility of '*Hidden Variables*' in Nature (originally forwarded by Louis de Broglie in 1927).

Looking at chemistry, it can generally be accepted that life is a particular feature of the molecular scale world - although guided by strong temporal influences of the macroscopic universe and based on the given set of elements (atoms) comprising the '*periodic table*'.

Indeed many chemists are driven in the choice of profession by an exciting feeling that it might one day reveal to them *the Secret of Life*. Chiefly this is the same drive that the Alchemists had in medieval times. Today chemists have learned to duplicate in the laboratory a whole range of substances that are ‘actors’ in living organisms, and they appear to be as effective and functional as those made in the original host. This was also achieved for the more complex biomolecules like RNA and DNA. For proteins this doesn’t always apply so easily: they have to be properly “folded” and chemically further modified in very ingenious ways to work properly in the host. At the same time, chemists are still dumbfounded by the capability of certain organisms to produce the most complex organic structures. Look for instance at this structure, Brevetoxin-1, a neurotoxin that has only recently been synthesized in the laboratory:

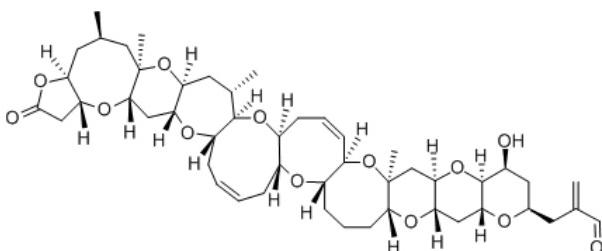


Figure 5. The structure of Brevetoxin.

Surely, if there is a creator, His ability to ‘design’ such a repertoire of stupefying chemical substances and encompassing also their intricate interactions, would be of a kind beyond human comprehension. If one adheres to the evolutionary scheme, including also the chemical evolution that must have preceded biological evolution, the process looks much like ‘a happy accident’ guided largely by macroscopic events in the universe. Of course both are extremes in view, and these have to be consoled with each other. Unfortunately, for the layman

the comprehension of Quantum Theory remains poor. The concepts of ‘complementarity’, ‘quantum coherence’, ‘entanglement’ and ‘fuzziness’ of matter and its related ‘observables’ are really not understandable to him. In fact, it remains an enigma to many scientists too, particularly in its most orthodox form, the *Copenhagen* interpretation, as forwarded originally by Max Born and Werner Heisenberg in 1927 and Niels Bohr in 1928. This in essence posed that only the mathematical framework (the ‘matrix mechanics’ method later formalized by Paul Dirac) is complete and dependable. Although it soon prompted a protest from Einstein - “*Gott würfelt nicht*” - the experimental accuracy of quantum theory has been firmly established and it does force us to change our conception of reality and likewise that of God!

In essence this is the main purpose of this thesis: In the light of quantum theory, and that of the underlying framework, *String Theory*, we have to adapt our notion of reality and include a numinous, spiritual component, which has to be treated in the fashion of the ‘*Hidden Variable*’ thesis of de Broglie and Bohm. A first consideration we have to forward here is that the theoretical framework should be viewed separately from the actual information contained in the framework - like the computer set apart from its programs and stored data. The framework is the space (dimensions, dominions) in which the information resides and acts. The framework is possibly simple, while the data is complex, but it cannot grow out of its allotted frame. As a second consideration, one should question the accuracy of the Schrödinger equation on larger temporal and spatial scales. It has been demonstrated in many studies on small groups of molecules that the theory is accurate. However, an overwhelming problem appears when one tries to solve the Schrödinger equation for much larger systems of molecules, and especially systems that approach the size of a living cell. The

scientists have arbitrarily drawn a line still between life and death at this level: the molecules that comprise the cell are not considered to be '*living*' entities, while the cell is considered as '*alive*'. However, upon further contemplation, one must notice that this is a hypothesis in further need of proof: "*Where actually does Life enter into the equations and in what way when passing from the molecular to the cellular scale?*" Will '*Life*' in some way emerge out of the quantum theory when treating a super-large ensemble of molecules? This question cannot be answered, because the size of the system and the time scale needed to make any *exact* calculation ('*ab initio*') on a simple living cell is practically impossible. If we make approximations in the calculations, e.g. by using classical mechanics, we might just miss out on the very elusive '*life effect*'. This illustrates the unique circumstance of '*emanation*' of forms and processes: it says that "*scale DOES matter!*" In some mysterious way life emanates from the large ensemble of molecules. In another way, the molecules emanate from the ensemble of atoms (at this stage well understood by classical quantum theory), and in another way (quantum electrodynamics or string theory) the atoms emanate from the (proposed) strings. The hierarchical emanation of forms is, of course, of central interest in the field of theosophy, and it will be treated later in its own space.

A third profound issue, which is still heating the discussions of scientists up to the present day, is the suspicion (originally tossed by Einstein, Rosen and Podolsky^{<37>}) that the quantum theory is *incomplete*. As proposed above, there may indeed be another subtle term in the Hamilton-Jacobi equation of motion that would depict another type of potential, besides the *causal* and *implicate* potentials arising out of Schrödinger's equations, as earlier shown in the derivation by David Bohm. Arguably, a '*prime mover*' might be added, but then the question arises in what way and at what scale this mover operates. One might

propose that the scale on which ‘He’ operates is much smaller than that of the atoms, likely on the scale of the numinous ‘strings’. This would explain a few features of living systems, especially with respect to the emanation of forms.

This brings us to the fourth point of heated discussion: the *creation* of the whole universe in which we have found ourselves. Of course the anthropic principle says nothing other than that we are here because the conditions for our existence (the numinous properties of all elementary particles and the values of some natural constants) were perfectly matched, such that life could start. That is not even a scientific theory. It is a misplaced triviality, because the opposite is also a trivial truth: if other matter would have arisen, life (as we know it) would not have formed. However, another misuse of triviality is experienced with the newest theory according to which the whole universe was created ‘*out of nothing as a quantum event*’ (the inflation theory). In one moment the universe was not there; then it came about as an immense concentration of matter and energy in a spot deemed smaller than an atom, which expanded first with immense speed. After this, expansion continued, during which various forms of matter and forces arose. The early universe was packed very densely, and there was only one force, but after a short time it broke up in different types, having different ‘symmetries’. Nothingness and ‘something-ness’ were (arguably) so close together, that a mere quantum fluctuation was able to set about the entire known universe, not to speak of the unknown universe we do not see. Although this sounds like the notions of George Mead^{<24>} about the ‘*Life-breath of the universe at the zero-point of being*’, at least on the part of the ‘*outbreathing*’, this remains to be substantially proven. Since Paul Dirac, there has been the discovery of anti-matter, and some anti-particles, such as the positron, have been successfully made in particle accelerators. However, when

creating our universe like this, it does logically follow that anti-matter and matter should have arisen in equal measure. Various theories have been launched that try to explain the discrepancy of amount of matter and anti-matter in the universe. To quote from the recent article by Frank Wilczek^{<38>}:

"One can speculate that the universe began in the most symmetrical state possible and that in such a state no matter existed; the universe was a vacuum. A second state existed, and in it matter existed. The second state had slightly less symmetry, but was also lower in energy. Eventually a patch of less symmetrical phase appeared and grew rapidly. The energy released by the transition found form in the creation of particles. This event might be identified with the Big Bang ... The answer to the ancient question 'Why is there something rather than nothing' would be that 'nothing' is unstable."

So, in the very beginning of the *Big Bang* there should have been an equal amount of matter and anti-matter, but at a certain point there came about an ‘asymmetry’ in which slightly more matter was produced than anti-matter. This could be the result of a trade-off between energy decrease and symmetry increase, much as we see with phase transitions, such as water changing into ice. As symmetry is a form of information in the universe, and the second law of thermodynamics states that entropy can't decrease but only increase in a series of causal events, we may have an explanation for the birth of a universe by which an increase in symmetry plays the major role. This can be understood by noting that the state of symmetry before inflation must have been **zero**, and thus the energy gain due to increase in symmetry (creating new dimensions and particles) must be **huge**. Therefore, *nothingness is unstable* because of its extremely low entropy. Interesting idea, but in practical mathematics one cannot divide by zero! Likely the laws of thermodynamics even may not hold under such extreme circumstances.

Science and Religion

There has still not been any examination of the question how religious notions can be reconciled with scientific laws and theories as we know them in our present time. Herbert Spencer addressed this question laboriously in his '*First Principles*' ^{<39>}. Although his treatise is still much indebted to Kant and was written before the quantum mechanics revolution, Spencer pointed out some fundamental problems of logic around this issue. After showing aptly how the '*self-existing*' and '*self-created*' theories of the universe are logically untenable, he continues to address the third option:

There remains the commonly-received or theistic hypothesis: creation by [an] external agency. Alike in the rudest creeds and in the cosmogony long current among ourselves, it is assumed that the Heavens and the Earth were made somewhat after the manner in which a workman makes a piece of furniture. And this is the assumption not only of theologians but of most philosophers.

Equally in the writings of Plato and in those of not a few living men of science, we find it assumed that there is an analogy between the process of creation and the process of manufacture. Now not only is this conception one which cannot by any cumulative process of thought, or the fulfilment of predictions based on it, be shown to answer to anything actual; but it cannot be mentally realized, even when all its assumptions are granted.

Though the proceedings of a human artificer may vaguely symbolize a method after which the Universe might be shaped, yet imagination of this method does not help us to solve the ultimate problem, namely, the origin of the materials of which the Universe consists. The artizan does not make the iron, wood, or stone, he uses, but merely fashions and combines them. If we suppose suns, and planets, and satellites, and all they contain to have been similarly formed by a 'Great Artificer', we suppose merely that certain pre-existing elements were thus put into their present arrangement. But whence the pre-existing elements? The production of matter out of nothing is the real mystery, which neither this simile nor any other enables us to conceive; and a simile which does not enable us to conceive this may as well be dispensed with."

In his discourse, Spencer does not waver to dismiss the insufficiency of the theistic theory of things, particularly when he turns from creation of material objects to the contemplation of creation of space:

'Did there exist nothing but an immeasurable void, explanation would be needed as much as it is now. There would still arise the question how came it so? If the theory of creation by external agency were an adequate one, it would supply an answer, and its answer would be space was made in the same manner that matter was made. But the impossibility of conceiving this is so manifest that no one dares to assert it. For if space was created it must have been previously non-existent. The non-existence of space cannot, however, by any mental effort be imagined. And if the non-existence of space is absolutely inconceivable, then, necessarily, its creation is absolutely inconceivable. ...'

*Only in some **highly abstract proposition** can Religion and Science find a common ground. Neither such dogmas as those of the Trinitarian and Unitarian, nor any such idea as that of propitiation, common though it may be to all religions, can serve as the desired basis of agreement; for Science cannot recognize beliefs like these: they lie beyond its sphere. Not only, as we have inferred, is the essential truth contained in Religion that most abstract element pervading all its forms, but, as we here see, this most abstract element is the only one in which Religion is likely to agree with Science."*

And here Spencer adds a more pertinent insight with real significance to the present discussion:

Similarly if we begin at the other end, and inquire what scientific truth can unite Science with Religion; Religion can take no cognizance of special scientific doctrines, any more than Science can take cognizance of special religious doctrines. The truth which Science asserts and Religion indorses cannot be one furnished by mathematics; nor can it be a physical truth; nor can it be a truth in chemistry. No generalization of the phenomena of space, of time, of matter, or of force, can become a Religious conception. Such a conception, if it anywhere exists in Science, must be more general than any of these must be one underlying all of them."

The problem is, according to Spencer, before all that science and religion lie in conception too far apart. However, as I hope to show here, we can use Quantum Theory and Theosophy to bridge the gap, since they introduce concepts that lie intermediate between science and religion. Eventually, the proposed model is indeed too abstract to explain all the details of reality in which we live, a weakness which is already implied in the theory. The framework, however, could be shaped at least to envelop both the material and the spiritual realms as being a mathematical and physical framework of reality. Modern theories do indeed furnish mathematical equations that describe the physical and chemical reality quite well. In addition, the theories predict various numinous processes, some of which lie in the sphere of theosophy. We are thus here on the course of building a bridge first between Science and String Theory, then between Theosophy and Religion and finally between Theosophy and String Theory. One might object that String Theory already is science, but presently it is a framework model in further need of proof to be accepted as real science, and it has “stolen” some concepts of Theosophy. Thus, for clarity, we should further scrutinise this bridge-building. The way to proceed here is to find the common grounds between these four disciplines (physical science, string theory, theosophy and theology), their points of agreement. In the discourse below the main arguments are proposed to form our cement in the bridge construction work.

Firstly, Science is firmly rooted in the concepts of causality and logic, but is restricted in the sense that it can only study reproducible phenomena. This it can do, however, with a continuously increasing set of instrumental techniques. So, it is capable of making observations on the mind, as far as it is residing in the brain. However, that part of the mind that is not located in the brain is already restricted territory. The soul

quite simply does not exist to the orthodox scientist. He is not able to study the soul as an objective entity, unless somebody devises an instrument, or camera, or spectrum analyser to pinpoint the soul.

Secondly, string theory is firmly rooted in the highly complex mathematics framework of quantum theory and in the evidence provided by ever newly discovered elementary particles and their interconversions. However, at the present stage the theory is concerned with rather purely mathematical concepts, attempting to fit into the same framework some concepts that have appeared irreconcilable (i.e. General Relativity and Quantum Theory). Presently, there are five different flavours of String Theory and it is in danger of expanding into ever increasing numbers of dimensions.

Thirdly, Theosophy is largely concerned with the spiritual world also beyond that of the individual soul, and proposes a set of dimensions that looks more like a '*reflection*' of the real world, including an '*inner macrocosmos*'. As this is still rather unexplained at the present point this will be taken up in the next chapters. Basically, the cement between the String Theory and the Theosophical world view needs our prime attention.

Finally, the Theological (religious) element is mainly concerned with the nature of God. As the final frontier in our knowledge, all things related to God are mainly revealed in the ancient books of various civilisations. The notion of God has therefore not greatly changed up to the present times, carrying a rather long dogmatic burden, which is highly contradictory to present day science. With the coming of Christ, however, already a definitive step was taken in re-appraisal of the nature of God towards what is now called 'process theology'. Here God is not anymore viewed as omnipotent (in the sense of coercive), but He has power of persuasion rather than coercion, thus making Him much more lenient. According to the Theologists,

reality is made up of a wealthy movement of forms in time, which are *experiential* in nature and have both a physical and mental *aspect*. Another important tenet of religious thought is that all change is carried out by self-determination and free will. This applies also to God: although He cannot have total control over any series of events or any individual, He exercises his will by *offering and sifting possibilities*. This more or less sounds like a God subtly meddling in the nature of Quantum states to redirect causality to a more restricted set of possible events.

However, these issues concerning the Nature of God are outside the scope of this thesis. The author also rather likes to abide by the second commandment. Lest we are very dogmatic in our opinions, we at least know that reality has these two ingredients: the material world, which we observe, and our inner, spiritual world, which we experience. To bridge the gap between these worlds, those of Science and Religion we will need some rare mortar indeed: I propose Theosophy and String Theory (or a modification of it) to fulfil this purpose.

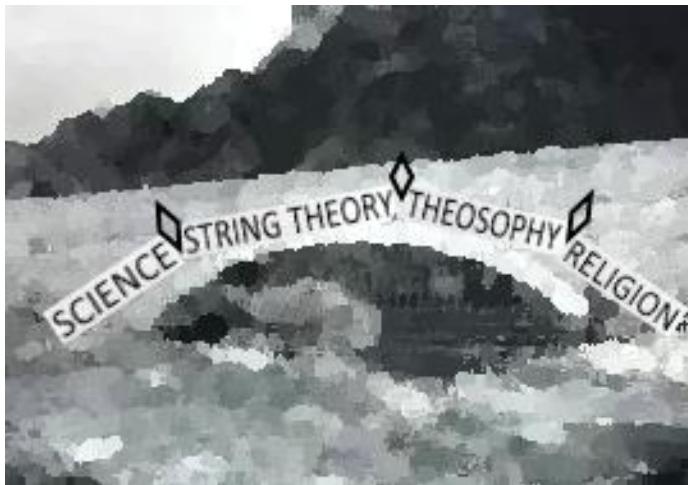


Figure 6. The bridge to be crossed in this thesis.

With Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, the King of philosophical ideas in his time - who Spencer failed to appreciate - an important corner-stone in our current construction effort was provided: In the “*Phenomenology of the Spirit*”^{<40>} Hegel introduces the *Universal Spirit* as the starting point of the whole of nature, history, knowledge and human consciousness. Like the *Universal Substance* of the alchemists, the spiritual element works through periods of consciousness and unconsciousness (the Aeons in theosophical terms) to shape the free individual and the progress of history. The struggle of life and death between the spiritual and material realms, the one enslaving the other in turns and finally reaching a ‘*universal moral law*’, forms the backbone of Hegel’s thought. The substance matter from which we try to constitute our path to reality revolves around the questions of understanding of the operations of ‘strings’ as a basic unit (here just in terms of the ‘quantum states’ or ‘quantum potential’ and their transitions), and how to construct an abstract framework of the mental universe, adopting the three-tiered model of the theosophists.

Concerning these intricate questions, it is useful have some starting point. Although there are a myriad of issues related to cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis, a particular viewpoint was found in a recent discussion between David Bohm and Rupert Sheldrake on the subject of ‘*morphic fields*’. These fields were proposed by Sheldrake as another type of causation, seen apart from, and very different from, ordinary ‘energetic’ causation. Morphic fields propagate through space and time in such a way that past events could influence new events everywhere else by changing the probability of events in favour of the form of the earlier events. Although morphic fields have, as a physical concept, not yet been observed, they may be viewed in terms of the Bohmian quantum potential, representing them as an ‘information field’. The field transmits ‘active information’, in a

similar fashion, discussed by Bohm, as to a radar-guided ship:

“... the interesting thing is that the quantum potential energy had the same effect regardless of its intensity, so that even far away it may produce a tremendous effect; this effect does not follow an inverse square law. Only the form of the potential has an effect, and not its amplitude or its magnitude. So we compared this to a ship being guided by radar; the radar is carrying form or information from all around. It doesn’t, within its limits, depend on how strong the radio wave is. So we could say that in that sense the quantum potential is acting as a formative field on the movement of the electrons. The formative field could not be put in three-dimensional space, it would have to be in three-n [3^n] dimensional space, so that there would be non-local connections, or subtle connections of distant particles, which we see in the Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen experiment. So there would be a wholeness about the system such that the formative field could not be attributed to that particle alone; it can be attributed only to the whole, and something happening to faraway particles can affect the formative field of other particles. There could thus be a transformation of the formative field of a certain group to another group. So I think that if you attempt to understand what quantum mechanics means by such a model, you get quite a strong analogy to a formative field.”^{<41>}

However, Bohm was not quite ready to bring it any further than a mere analogy, since:

“... the present quantum mechanics does not have any concept of movement or process or continuity in time; it deals with one moment only, one observation, and the probability that one observation will be followed by another one. But there is obviously process in the physical world. Now I want to say that process can be understood from the implicate order as this activity of re-projection and re-injection. So, the theory of the implicate order, carried this far, goes quite beyond present quantum mechanics... Re-injection is exactly what the Schrödinger equation is describing. And re-projection is the next step, which quantum mechanics doesn’t handle.”^{<41>}

At this point Bohm strived to reclaim his notion of ‘projection’ in relation to the implicate order as a model for actuality (for which quantum mechanics neither seems to have an answer):

“We have a projection of the whole to constitute a moment: a moment is a movement. And we can say that that projection is the actualization. In other words, the thing that physics doesn’t discuss is how various successive moments are related, and that’s what I say the implicate order is trying to do.”^{<41>}

Although it was a bold statement for a physicist, Sheldrake carried it even a step further: from morphic fields to morphic resonance, introducing the role of cosmic memory:

“If you start framing the whole topic in physical terms, as I do with morphogenetic fields, then you have to speak in terms of morphic resonance, the influence of past forms on present ones through the morphogenetic field by a kind of resonance. If, however, you start using psychological language, and you start to talk in terms of thought, then you’ve got a handier way of thinking of the influence of the past, because with mental fields you have memory. And one can extend this memory if one thinks of the whole universe as essentially thought-like, as many philosophical systems have done. You could say that if the whole universe is thought-like, then you automatically have a sort of cosmic memory developing.”^{<41>}

Sheldrake then refers, among others, to the Akashic record of the theosophists, and poses that the notion of the implicate order helps to overcome the materialist-idealistic dichotomy, because it can be the basis both of reality and thought (matter and mind), which Bohm confirms (*In fact, its very essence is that transcendence*). Further discussion focussed on implications for ‘evolutionary creativity’ and lead to the stance that even at some point back in time nothing existed, even not any laws, so that the presence of formative fields can only be traced back to a certain point after the Big Bang.

Related to the second question whether his concept of the implicate order can be used for constructing a simplified model of the three-tiered structure of the universe, Bohm did give some clues. In the former citations, Bohm referred to the $3 \times n$ dimensions needed, where n is the number of particles in the system. For a particle moving in the three realms of spiritual, material and plenum, 9 dimensions would be needed. Adding one of time, we end up with a ten dimensional space-time in which to observe a single quantum state of a particle, and n particles would move in $9 \times n$ dimensions.

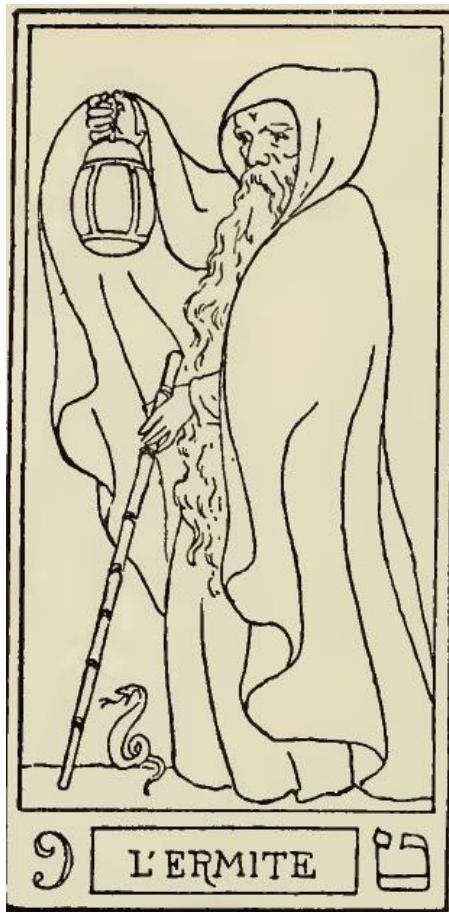
At this point, however, some clear shortcomings of the quantum theory, string theory and the Big Bang should be pointed out. With regards to quantum theory, the mathematical formulation allows, albeit with additional approximations, fairly accurate calculations on the scale of atoms and molecules, which are amenable to our observable world. The question still remains, however, if this theory is complete, and how it should be interpreted. Besides the ‘orthodox’ Copenhagen interpretation, the theories of de Broglie and Bohm seem to have some weird implications, and at very small distances, that of the strings, no experimental methods have yet been found to study them. Additionally, the amount of strings that may potentially be formed are almost limitless, so one is still left with the question why there is only this very limited set of strings that lie at the basis of our standard model and our existence. It is likely that the rest of the universe may still contain lots of other string-based elementary particles of which we know nothing. The only things we see out here are the stars, which are similar to the sun, but yet of great variety of size and energy. Black holes pose even a much greater enigma, because their study can only be indirect, looking at the behaviour of objects near them. Nobody knows what happens inside these numinous bodies of huge mass.

Scientists sit with confidence on their throne, undoubtedly an earned one, but they are actually not able to explain their theories in understandable terms to the public at large¹. The larger the scales of space-time become in relation to our local world, or the smaller, the larger is our lack of understanding. Although the quantum theory gives rigorous predictions on which we base most of our modern technology, the results are often counterintuitive. Quantum ‘states’ (as ‘vector spaces’) are difficult to understand, as well as the non-local effects. However, the implication of this theory with in the theosophical framework of the universe, particularly that the universe is primarily mental: particles and phenomena do not seem to exist independently from observation. Thus, scientists in the 21st century may have to come to terms with this numinous reality.

Therefore, it pays off to study some of the basic elements from the realm of Theosophy to re-construct the framework model in a more understandable form than that of mathematics and then relate them back to the present state of scientific theory. That this involves the existence of a ‘God’ may at first seem a stubborn position, but then one should realise that theosophy is not a static subject: theosophy evolves in time to redefine God from a more general philosophy. Its doctrines and standpoints depend less on the dogmatic tenets of theology. That this doctrine was sometimes called the ‘secret doctrine’ need not worry us: theosophy has evolved also further since Blavatsky. However, I propose in this thesis that theosophy ought to be used as a vehicle towards better understanding of the modern scientific theories. This last step, however, we will leave to the reader to decide for himself at the end of this treatise.

¹ This situation is, however, rapidly improving.

Part III ~ Winter



8. Jupiter

I think the whole of civilisation is in the balance nowadays. This is everything we love. The planet earth will still be there... no matter what we do, there always will be spiders, and rats, but what we call civilisation... if we care about music, if you care about the health of your grandparents, about theatre, literature, kids playing on the playground, whatever you care for, whatever you love, this is what we are talking about, this is what is at stake here: our civilization.

Niels Harrit

 N the 15th of December 2021 Kenneth Tielock had started his day with a troubled heart on his grand estate at Clermont-de-Beauregard in the Dordogne where he had been consolidating his position as Grand Master of the Phoenix Syndicate, a title completely of his own invention. The organization he served had nothing in common with the Grand Orient of France and neither with any masonic Grand Lodge. He was merely the chief executive of a consortium of affluent individuals that covertly meddled in international affairs for own personal gain. The syndicate was erected out of the remains of the nameless cabal, whose major demise in 2016 forced most members to go underground, in some cases literally. As the name suggests, the Phoenix Consortium was installed to get the cabal on its feet again, but this had proven difficult after their earlier exposure. In five years the international community had re-organised itself against such cliques highly effectively and the present remaining members were wise enough to keep silent. Their main strength was secrecy and concealment, and their position was backed up by assets, mainly gold of all sorts, in the headquarters at Clermont-de-Beauregard. The value of these assets had risen with the gold price to astronomical levels. However, recently a small set-back had presented itself: Kenneth had been put on the list of billionaires of Forbes International, where he was mentioned as a '*leading collector of ancient art*', a disclosure that had spoiled his appetite. As the day started, he was contemplating how to

address his banking group in the afternoon, and then wandered off considering where he could spend his Christmas holiday safely. It was slightly before 12 ‘o clock when Gaston, his private secretary and butler, entered the study with a card on a silver platter. “Un visiteur, Maître,” he said.

Kenneth lifted up the paper in the morning sunlight, saying: “Très bien Gaston, laissez-les dans le Bibliothèque.”

The paper read: ‘*His Royal Highness, Hamid al-Yassin Al-Mabbet bin Gordium etc. etc.*’ “Ah... interesting,” he whispered in plain English to himself. This was a bit out of schedule for the day. Still, he straightened his white bow tie, and slowly descended the stairs. Then he walked a fair distance to the library where he would receive his uninvited guest. His estate was maybe not as large as Versailles, but almost. Guests appearing on his doorstep without invitation were always shown off by Gaston, but this visitor was clearly one he couldn’t leave to his loyal servant. As he entered the library, the sheer sight of which would make any book antiquarian faint, he found not one but two guests there standing and admiring the ceiling, which was filled with elaborate frescos. Both visitors were commonly dressed in jeans and T-shirts and were utterly out-of-tune with the ambiance of the library.

“Well, well, Hamid, how nice of you to call on me!” said Kenneth. “I have been wondering what became of you after your abdication.”

“I have been very well, Kenny. Just wondered recently whither to you might have slithered. It has not been easy to track you down. When did you install yourself in this huge place?”

“Four years ago. Crete was a bit too austere,” said Kenneth. “And who may I have the pleasure of seeing here?”

“My wife, Dinah,” said Hamid.

Kenny took her hand and kissed it with a courteous bow. “*Mon honneur, Madamme?*” At this point he decided to drop the preliminaries: “What is it you want to see me about, Hamid?”

“A few issues came up, Kenny. Good that you showed me into your library, because the main reason lies in a rare book...” Hamid urged,

scooping a leather book from his rucksack, “and also in *this* book...” He took out a smaller volume.

Kenny inspected both. The first one was not known to him, but the second one he almost instantly recognised. “That is strange,” he droned, almost inaudibly. “Let us sit down here for a while.” He went over to the wall and rang the butler. Gaston showed up almost without delay. “Do you want tea or coffee?” he asked.

“Tea for us, please,” said Hamid, seating himself in a plush chair.

“Gaston, un café, dues tees, et at-il des gâteaux?”

“Oui, bien sûr, Maître!” Gaston lisped, and then he promptly left.

Kenneth sat down with his guests and fumbled through the smaller booklet. “How on earth did you get this copy of the *Très Sainte Trinosophie?*” he asked, slightly perplexed.

“I borrowed it from a friend in England,” Hamid answered.

“Oh, but that’s pretty odd. Wasn’t there only *one* specimen of this book? It is handwritten.”

“Yes, that’s what I thought. My friend asked me to compare it to the original kept in the library of Troyes, but when I got there, they told me it had been lent some years ago to you. When I asked your address, they couldn’t find it at first, but they were able to produce it after some further digging in the library’s administration. So that’s how I found out your new address, in fact.”

“So, you want to compare the two manuscripts?”

“That’s one thing I’d like to do, yes.”

“Then I suppose I should lend it to you for a while. You should take care they don’t get mixed up.”

“In the Troyes specimen there are stamps of the library. In our copy there aren’t any,” said Hamid.

“Just a moment, I’ll fetch it.” Kenneth left the library and walked back to his own study where he kept the precious volume of the count of St. Germain on his personal bookshelf, close at hand. When he returned, he found Hamid and Dinah having tea and some cake.

“I say, Hamid,” Kenny started. “I am a bit pressed for time, but if you want you can stay here and study the book in all peace and quiet. I’d rather not give it away. In fact, I should return this soon.”

“They were indeed getting impatient in Troyes, because when they found the loan agreement it appeared that it had expired a year ago.”

“Well, you know how these libraries can be,” said Kenneth in a teasing voice.

“Maybe I can just take it back myself,” Hamid proposed.

“If you want... fine with me... What about that other hardback?”

“That’s the primary reason I’m here. Please read this page... You might find that enlightening,” said Hamid. Kenny took the opened book, and read the short epistle near the end of the oracles of Montanus.

“That’s quite stiff language,” said Kenneth.

“Indeed, but it made me wonder,” Hamid started, setting up his inquiry in the fashion of a covert cat and mouse game. “Don’t you think this interlinks somewhat with the conversation we had on my last visit?”

“The situation looks a bit like it, yes, but... what are you getting at?” Kenneth stammered.

“As predicted here in stanza three, in the times when the sacred oracles are abolished, the world economy will come down and as a result, a desperate attempt will be made to revive the oracle of Delphi. Guess my surprise at reading this epistle: all the treasures collected in Delphi have disappeared, just as the text says.”

“Well, Hamid, I would take that rather with a grain of salt... The Omphalos... It could mean almost *anything!*” Kenneth beamed.

Of course his subject would not be easily forthcoming, so Hamid entered on the instrument of provocation to drill deeper. “The particular sentence here in the text triggered my attention: ‘*Long will Apollo’s laurel leaves be robbed from mankind*. Does this not ring a bell?”

“No, no, I’m afraid for me it doesn’t,” said Kenny.

“You don’t remember Phillip Chance calling you about this... sometime in the spring of 2012?”

“No, no, I don’t recall. That’s almost ten years ago.”

“Hmm... but he called *me*,” Hamid lied, “and his inquiry was if I knew anything about a club of people trying to revive the oracle of Delphi. I said I knew absolutely nothing of the matter. Besides, I was too busy in the Syrian affair. But then Phil asked: ‘*Was it not Kenny who always lamented to me that it was so unfortunate that Apollo was still robbed of his laurel leaves?*’ I said I faintly remembered such a discussion, and then Phil asked if I knew what had become of you. I said I didn’t know, and then he decided to seek out contact with you.”

“Well, he never called me,” said Kenny. “Almost wish he *had*.”

“Yes, but the strange thing is, you see, he was on to a club of people that actively pursued the re-instalment of the Pythia in Delphi, and in the heat of his inquiries somebody planted a bomb on him - in the church collection box. It not only killed him, but nearly a quarter of his congregation.”

Kenny jumped up from his chair. “Hamid! Now I don’t like the tone of your inquiry! I’ve absolutely nothing to do with this. I lived a perfectly steady and peaceful life on Crete.”

“Sorry, Kenny,” said Hamid, raising his hands in defence, “you understand, in my position, I had to ask. Things were to me a bit too coincidental. I ask your pardon, for the intrusiveness of my questions.”

Kenny sat back in his chair, and gave a little sigh. It was not easy to regain control, because he very well recalled his discussion with Phillip Chance about the subject of Delphi.

“Phil did indeed call me,” he said. “I have to confess. And you were right: He asked me if I was aware of any person or organisation that actively pursued the revival of the sacred oracles. It had been a subject of conversation in our small Oxford Group more than once, as you seem to remember very well. But, to insinuate that I might be behind the Bristol Cathedral bombing is absurd. Actually, I’ve been trying to find out who did it, but have not been very successful. The

investigations were put quite effectively under the lid. Anyway, to me it looks more like an internal affair, one church against another.”

“That would be quite ludicrous, if you ask me,” said Hamid.

“We had our differences, Phil and me, but we had mutual respect. Do you really think I could kill an old college friend like that?”

“Sorry, Kenny, I’ll not raise the subject again. Are you aware of any militant parties that may have the same sort of interests in Delphi as you have?”

“Had, Hamid, had! I lost a fortune there, like *you!* All my Spartan armour is gone, for instance!”

“Do you know anything of a Rosicrucian fraternity called the *Purple Rose?*”

“Hmm... Odd that you mention this... My nephew Andy once asked me the same question. He had moved to Madeira, and said he was on the trail of a Rosicrucian brotherhood with that name, but then he died... in a police jail.”

“Oh, but then we may be on a legitimate line of inquiry,” said Hamid. “Did you follow up on him?”

“I did, but I learned that he hanged himself, so that was the end of the investigation.”

“I’ll burden you with another searching, but necessary, question: did you ever hear of a person with the name John Armstrong?”

Kenny shook his head. “Andy mentioned him. He was helping him on Madeira with his wine business, but I never met him.”

“I have reason to suspect that he was kept prisoner in your former monastery on Crete.”

Kenny looked at Hamid yet again with a fleeting air of indignation, and said, raising his middle finger: “Look now, Hamid, I have not kept any prisoners on Crete. Never! When would that have been?”

“Sometime roughly in the period of 1989 till 1990. We have also reason to believe that the prisoner managed to escape.”

“Such a long time ago? I wasn’t living there at that time. I was still studying in Oxford. I moved to Crete in 1993.”

“Ah... and from whom did you buy the place?”

“Oh, it was from the headman of the monastery. Dimitris tou Maleme he was called.”

“Demetrios of Maleme? A clergyman?”

“Yes, they were a bit in a hurry to move.”

“In a hurry, you say?”

“Yes, I think they were moving to an Eastern country, maybe India. It was a bit of a surprise to the people of Crete, because many came to ask where they had gone, but I couldn’t give them an exact address. One Englishman was particularly dismayed, an inspector of Scotland Yard who had a summer house in Chania.”

“Benjamin Miller?” asked Hamid.

“Exactly! He was from Birmingham. Talkative guy; when I had asked him over for a cup of coffee, he told me an incredible story about the death of an anthropology professor in Birmingham... He...”

“A professor that wanted to stage his disappearance... I’ve heard that story too,” Hamid interjected.

“Oh, really?” Kenny stammered.

“So you actually knew Benji Miller already for some time?” asked Hamid.

“Well, I didn’t see him very often. He lived in Chania in the summer holydays. He came to visit me in 2005 and then he asked me a lot about my family.”

“And then I mentioned him to you on my last visit: he was one of the two persons that approached me for making some contributions to Delphi,” said Hamid.

“Yes, yes, that was a bit of a surprise actually. So, you actually knew him also... even before the Delphi project?”

“Oh, sure I did! He was a friendly acquaintance. He had his way with people. Moved about in high circles and arranged all sorts of things. But he was a weapons salesman, you know.”

“You must be kidding!” Kenny frowned.

“Well, let’s say that I have held some suspicion that the arms deals he mediated were illicit, but in the end it seemed to be OK. In the end, I couldn’t get the missiles to fit the fighter planes. So, we were a bit cross with him.”

“You mean to say the fighter jets were quite useless!” said Kenny.

“Indeed! Unfortunately, Benji has been lying in coma in our hospital now for 5 years, and has slipped from the grip of worldly justice.”

“How awful!” said Kenny with a genuine sign of apprehension.

“Basically, I must admit I feel a bit guilty about it all. So, if it was from the original clergymen that you acquired the monastery, then this fits to the facts we know,” Hamid murmured. “We are then still at a dead end about the fate of John Armstrong when he arrived in Crete in 1989.”

“So, explain to me who this John Armstrong is,” asked Kenny.

“Family of some new friends I have made, while in Delphi.”

“Those who were on the spot when the whole place collapsed?”

“Indeed!”

“Weren’t you there too, as I requested?”

“I only met them the evening before the earthquake. I left in the morning, and returned to Phrygia.” said Hamid.

“So, you *didn’t* meet the Pythia?”

“Yes, I met her in the evening in the hotel bar and then the next morning at breakfast, just shortly before I left.”

“Ah!” said Kenny, “and what was she like?”

“A real prophetess, that was evident!”

Dinah had been silently sipping her tea, and Hamid was thinking of how to get some rest after the long day. However, at that instant Kenny conveniently excused himself.

“I’m awfully sorry, but I have an urgent meeting coming up, a slightly straining negotiation. I have somehow appeared on that wretched Forbes list, and I have no idea who is behind the disclosures that have put me there. So, I’ve started a small investigation. I suspect a leak in the banking group. So, in the meantime, why don’t you make

yourself comfortable here for a while? We can reconvene in the morning. That is, if you like it.”

“I generally don’t impose on people’s hospitality,” said Hamid, being again sparse with the truth, “but I think, as old college chums, and seeing the size of your place, which may be even larger than mine, I might stay the night. Is that OK for you, my dear?” Hamid nodded in Dinah’s direction.

“Fine with me,” she said.

“Our quest has taken a very interesting turn, Kenny. I also need to know more about the Tillock clan. Maybe you can help?”

“Well, I know about the more prominent members. And I have some genealogical surveys in my possession, so I could find out some things,” said Kenny. “Now that I come to think of it, Benji also enquired about the Tillock’s back in 2005. When I mentioned my brother Jonathan Tielock who had lived in Funchal, he was suddenly unusually interested in it. He asked me if I knew Andy Tielock. So, I told him that he was my nephew and that he had moved to Madeira after my brother’s death and that he was setting up his own winery. He mentioned John Armstrong who was helping him financially on Madeira, for some odd reason. He went there under the name Matheos Viglis.”

“That fits with what we know,” said Hamid.

“So, to be more complete, when Andy called, he asked me if I knew anything about the *Purple Rose*, I said I didn’t know anything about it. Then he informed me that he had come across some evidence that this brotherhood had been established by our forebears on the island, somewhere at the beginning of the 18th century, and that he would keep me in the loop. He still had to find out the location of their meeting place. He referred to a secret shrine, somewhere in Funchal. Anyhow, he was eager to start his winery, and was thinking of baptizing a red sparkling wine, in honour of his ancestors, *The Purple Rose*.”

“Ah, and did you convey this information also to Benjamin Miller?”

“Indeed. I noticed that he was eager to know more, but then he somehow restrained himself and said that he knew the island well, and that he had some good friends there. Then a few weeks later he called me and informed me he had sold his house in Chania and was looking for a nice place to spend his pension in Funchal.”

“Well, that seems to add up too,” said Hamid. “Do you know a person with the name Richard McGregor?”

“It was an old school mate of Andy’s.”

“You’re sure?”

“Yes, he frequented our house in Mauchline with Andy more than once at the end of the 1980’s. I shared a hobby with him, namely ancient weaponry. I more or less inspired him to become a collector also. I believe McGregor was a lot on the moors with Andy digging for old treasures.”

“But so was John Armstrong! In some way, they all knew each other through this hobby.”

“Yes, now that I come to think of it, they were searching for the lost treasures of the Covenanters, the Cameronians and such.”

“What kind of treasures?”

“Well... swords and shields mainly. But I was in those years already on the way to Oxford. I lost Andy out of sight before he called me in 1993.” Kenny swiftly inspected the large clock on the wall of the library, and said: “Let’s do so: Gaston will lodge you in the West Wing, and let us reconvene in the morning after breakfast and I’ll try to find these old papers of our family in the evening. It may become a long story. In fact, it all was set in motion again with Phillip’s phone call. He also wanted to know about my ancestors.”

“Of course we also would like to know a bit more about your involvement in the restoration plans of the ancient site of Delphi.”

“In the morning, please!” Kenny said, rising swiftly from his chair. He rang his butler, and marched out saying: “A revoir!”

The butler turned up and he guided the guests to the Chinese Rooms in the West Wing, a five minute walk.

That same day Michael and Pierce had travelled by plane to Greece. They had chosen the small hotel they had occupied in Itea in 2016, when they were assisting with the re-installation of the Pythia and her exceptional task. Now they were back to start investigating the site of Delphi again, which had been closed to the public for 5 years. The first person they planned to meet was Ioannis Diamantopolis, who had been in charge of the restoration project from its inception. He also knew some of the developments that had taken place afterwards, and they would speak to him in the morning.

In the evening, Michael received a call from Hamid at the time he was having dinner with Pierce in the hotel restaurant.

“I have got bait!” he reported to Michael. “Kenny was definitively one of the players, but he is not very forthcoming with information.” Hamid then further explained all he had gathered in his interview. Michael ended the phone conversation, saying: “Keep on the lookout, Hamid. If you are housed in the West Wing, logically you should explore the East Wing.”

“Well?” Pierce inquired impatiently. He had not heard all the details of the conversation.

“Kenneth Tielock has been found, he bought the monastery in 1993, and he knew about the Purple Rose from his nephew Andy Tielock. About Benji Miller’s possible involvement we are also one step further, but there is not yet anything definitive,” he mumbled.

“So, what about Benji Miller?”

“He lived in Chania in the early nineties, and he visited Kenneth Tielock in 2005. He was put on Andy’s and John’s trail by Kenneth. It seems he promptly decided to move to Madeira.”

“Jesus!” said Pierce. Then he struck a cross and whispered: “*Außer iniquitatem*”. There was still a remnant of Catholicism in him.

“I would rather say: by Jove!” Michael added. “Our mister Miller has been outwitting us all in a most extraordinary way. As the saying goes, silence is gold. I think he may have been in the game for political

purposes, maybe also for the gold. Kenneth Tielock was only in it for the Pythia and the antiquities.”

“Well, we don’t really *know* that, do we?”

“No, but it would make sense.”

“Surely a complicated mix of affairs this has become,” Pierce sighed.

“Let’s see what Hamid and Dinah find tonight,” said Michael.

“How on earth are we going to get access to the Delphi site? Those Yankees are watching the place day and night.”

“As their might has somewhat waned, we must hope - again - for some lucky stroke of fortune,” Michael jeered.

They had finished their dinner and Michael and Pierce returned to their rooms. Michael resumed reading his newest discovery: the ship’s log of the *Ondine*. His brother Gerald had found the logbook hidden in the captain’s rear cabin, when he had embarked on renewing the wood panelling. The book was surprisingly well preserved, but the curious handwriting was initially difficult to decipher. Michael, however, had slowly accustomed himself to the scribbles and could now read the short accounts of the sea voyages with an accustomed eye.

The vessel had been purchased by John Smollett in 1702, and the logbook started in 1718 when his son, James Smollett, at the age of 25, had taken over his father’s business and commandeered the *Ondine* mostly between Bristol and Lisbon. His business was largely related, as usual, to the wine trade with Portugal, but also longer trips to Madeira and the Bahamas were occasionally described. The home port of the *Ondine* was Bristol, Michael’s former home town. Evidently, the Treaty of Utrecht had been of great benefit to the wine trade, and in that time it could also operate without interference of the clan of Edward Teach, who under the name of *Blackbeard* used to capture trade vessels setting out to the Americas. Now Michael had already proceeded to the year 1720, and read on where he had left off:

10/5/1720. Amsterdam

Today called from Glasgow the Scotsman James Tulloch. He queried about the possibility to charter my ship, to collect a valuable cargo from

Sidon. Having bargained the price, he stated that most was to be delivered to Marseilles, and that a large, heavy crate was to be taken to Glasgow. We set the price for 250 Guinees, and agreed the sailing date at the 17th of May... On my inquiry of what the cargo precisely contained, he said there were sacks of plant seeds to be left in Marseille, and the cargo for Glasgow was a large wooden crate of which he could not reveal the contents. On my warning that I never trade in contraband, he simply responded that it was for the very Great Cause. He warned me, however, that the contents were not to be revealed to the layman, for it had a great secret power. With pleasure I consented, and informed that for the Great Cause I was always happy to assist in any way I could... I still asked whether the secret power of the cargo could bring the Sea voyage into jeopardy, but James Tulloch was confident it couldn't do any harm when properly veiled from sight.'

Michael was running red in the face. "What the devil?" he exclaimed. He read on for a few minutes more, his face reddening with every line. He then came across another striking passage:

12/8/1743 Crete,

"Presently our services were called upon by our Scottish client to assist a person in need, someone who may prove a good ally in the near future. The gentleman, who goes under the name Marie-Antoine de Saint Germain, a noble Count, had arrived from Persia a week earlier and needed a safe envoy to Glasgow. He had been staying with the Shah for five years to learn chemistry, and resided one year at Damascus to found a Rosicrucian brotherhood, which went under the name of the Purple Rose. He seems to be an important person, known to the Royalty of many countries and also seems to be acquainted with The Young Chevalier and Sir Horace Walpole. He had an impressive collection of gem stones and other valuables that needed safe conveyance to Scotland, some for assistance in the Great Cause of the Jacobites.

When we collected him at the deserted harbour of Sitia, he had just travelled there from Persia. The Count is of medium height with regular features, of brown complexion, with black hair. He has highly elegant

manners, and his conversation is entertaining, witty and sometimes indicates true genius. He dresses simply but with good taste. He wears rings with large diamonds on nearly every finger, and there are smaller diamonds set also in his snuffboxes and his watches, of which he has an admirable collection. He seems to be an expert on precious stones, which he gathered in Persia, and their present value is estimated at 250,000 Francs. The count seems to converse in French, German, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese equally perfectly. The count also seems to have some control of Greek and Latin, and in the Orient has acquainted himself with Sanskrit, Chinese and Arabic. He had high hopes of improving his English, which was somewhat poor. When I mentioned he spoke Portuguese with a Madeiran accent, he made me a compliment, and informed me that he was anxious to return to his cherished island sometime soon. According to his account, he was born at the royal château of Saint-Germain-en-Laye in 1698 as the last illegitimate son of Charles II and brought up on Madeira. Since 1715 he had been on continued studies overseas in Germany France and Persia.

The count travelled with a small clavichord which he put up in the middle of the saloon. During the trip he played on it most of the time uninhibited by the great weight of his rings and the rough sea. He said that he had some pieces to prepare for the London Hay-Market theatre. We did not further impose on the count and ask about his connections in Scotland, but according to his own voluntary account he seemed very much opposed to government interference in religious affairs, and was particularly worried about the situation of rivalry between the Scottish clans.”

Michael, with trembling hands, ran out of his room with the logbook. He leaped to Pierce's room, which was right next to his. Banging on the door he yelled: “Pierce! Open up, before I faint!”

Pierce's worried face appeared in the door opening: “Did the dinner fall badly?”

“Listen to this!” Michael exclaimed. “It’s a miracle!!”

~

It was already late in the evening when Dinah and Hamid had finished dinner in their room, topped off with a few glasses of exquisite red

wine from the region. They discussed how they would start looking for Maria.

“Let me go,” said Dinah. “I can always pretend I lost the way.”

“But what will you do when you find her?” asked Hamid.

“I can leave her my mobile phone. It’s very slim. Maybe I can slip it under the door.”

“Clever girl!” said Hamid.

“I’ll go very early in the morning. I think two ‘o clock will be best.”

“Better have some sleep then,” said Hamid.

They both tried to get some sleep, but it didn’t come instantly.

“Have you seen anything in the mirror?” asked Hamid.

“No, absolutely nothing. I was trying to recall something about those Persian wedding mirrors, but I just seem to have forgotten.”

“There was some fairy tale about the *Mirror of Forgetfulness* and the *Mirror of Remembrance*, if I recall right.”

“Maybe, but this pair of mirrors forms some kind of communication device, as our host in Scotland suggested.”

“Luckily we have our mobile phones to substitute the older technology,” said Hamid. “They at least always work.”

“No, they don’t *always* work!” said Dinah.

“Indeed! When there is no field in the East Wing, you might need to come up with another trick.”

“I’m cold,” Dinah then said, clasping on to Hamid.

“Come here then, my little enchantress,” said Hamid.

“You have become so very warm and moderate, Hamid. You used to be such a stern person. Hope I have not made you too meek.”

“Happy to be your slave, as always,” Hamid said, taking her in his arms. Her feet were indeed cold as stone. “Still, when I face Kenny again in the morning, I won’t be that meek. He killed Phil, I’m sure of it, and he will know that vengeance is mine!”

“We don’t need to do anything more than to expose him,” said Dinah.

“And so we will,” said Hamid.

Sleep came and Dinah's phone alarm had to ring long and loud.
“Hamid, wake up! I need to go now.”

Hamid rose slowly, shaking his head. “What a *terrible* hour!”

“Just the right hour,” said Dinah.

She slipped out of bed and put on her soft slippers. Then she took up her super-slim mobile phone.

“Will you please be careful?” said Hamid.

“I think I'll manage. Watch your phone!”

Without a sound she left the room. There was a very long corridor leading to the central part of the building, and Dinah drifted through it silently like a ghost, with her white, silk night gown and her soft, purple slippers. She wondered if there were any cameras, but there weren't any clearly visible. In the central building she went down two flights of stairs, landing on the ground floor. She guessed that she should now proceed to the East wing by a similar corridor. The building was huge, but it was highly symmetrical, so that the corridor showed up at the expected location. She had just walked on for almost half of the length when she noticed a door being opened at the end of the dimly lit passageway. She jumped into a recess, which appeared to be giving entrance to a toilet. She opened the door and slipped in. She peeped through the slit of the door to see who would be passing by: apparently it was a servant in a white outfit carrying a dining plate. '*Clearly another guest at the other side of the building,*' Dinah convinced herself.

When complete silence had again descended on the premises, Dinah continued her trip through the corridor. Having arrived at the other end, she passed through the steel fire door from which the servant had appeared, and surmised that the room she was looking for should be quite near in the basement. This she concluded, because in the vision of Maria's room in the ominous mirror she had seen quite small windows propped up near the ceiling. Behind the door at the end of the corridor there was a flight of stairs descending into the basement, but there was complete darkness in this part of the building. However, clearly audible, piano music resounded and Dinah walked on towards the source of the

sound. She switched on the flashlight of the mobile phone to be able to see in front of her. Not really more than ten meters from the staircase she saw a streak of light emerging from under one of the doors. It was a heavy door with bolts on the outside. Piano music sounded clearly, and Dinah knocked firmly on the door.

The music halted, and a voice said: "Who's there?"

"I'm Dinah al-Yassin!" she said. "Are you Maria Ferraris?"

"Yes, yes. What is your business at this late hour?"

"To get you out of your predicament, of course! You must have greetings from my husband Prince Hamid."

A clicking sound was heard, and a small slot in the middle of the door opened. Dinah recognised the pale face that now stared at her. "Ah, so you are the young wife of the former King Hamid! Well, I must say it took your time to find me. What's your plan?"

"Here, take my phone and call Hamid. The number is already selected... The PIN code is 1234, simple enough. I must go now!" Dinah whispered. She handed over her phone through the slot, and then quickly returned to the staircase, silently and swiftly through the darkened corridor.

She was quite undisturbed on her return, and traversing the east wing she decided to visit the earlier toilet there for two good reasons: she was in need of a pee and for a possible excuse. Still she was not spotted by anyone when she walked through the last stretch of the corridor towards the central part of the building. She recognised the library with faint lights on through the large windows. However, as women are very inquisitive, and Dinah particularly so, she decided to have a quick look around. She started to go up the two flights of stairs and noticed the second floor was quite similar in layout. Thus, she decided to have a short glimpse of the premises. Stepping out of the staircase she was countered by an overwhelming sight unfolding before her eyes: a complete museum of ancient treasures, neatly on display in a well-lit hall. Spellbound she observed through the large windows a huge room full of glass vitrines. There was gold, gold, and more gold.

Tracian gold, Chinese gold, Persian gold, Egyptian gold; it was an almost endless collection of which the market value could not even be guessed. Now Dinah was slowly getting angry. She opened a large glass door and entered the Holy of Holies. Slowly she walked around the vitrines, inspecting golden treasure after golden treasure. Finally, she arrived at a well-known exhibit: Hamid's golden throne, the one that was once made by King Midas of Phrygia. It was on display exactly in the middle of the exhibition hall. She stared at the two lion heads that formed the armrest. They had the same red, fiery eyes that had five years earlier knocked out the hard-headed police inspector Benjamin Miller. Observing the lion heads, the royal seat strangely appealed to her. She seated herself on the throne, and a strong feeling of rage gradually took hold of her. *'That bloody liar!* Dinah mumbled with reference to Kenny Tielock. The time of reckoning had indeed arrived. Of course she had taken too much time for her excursion. Gaston was making his nightly round, and found the door of the museum ajar. Pulling a small revolver out of his pocket, he slipped inside and found Dinah sitting on the throne. Sneakily, he stepped beside her. "Bonne nuit, Madame," he said, "Have you lost your way?"

Dinah turned her head and countered Gaston and his little pop-gun with a rare determination. She said in a menacing voice: "No. I am deliberately trespassing."

"Very unwise, Madame," Gaston said.

"This throne is the legal property of my husband!" she screamed.

"Indeed, and now unfortunately it is ..." he started, but then fell silent, as he saw the utter rage expressed in Dinah's face. He saw eyes as burning coals, and it was as if her black hair took the form of a whole collection of snakes, wriggling slowly in his direction. The spectre of a Medusa filled Gaston with mortal fear.

"We know all about you and your lot," Dinah's voice bellowed, low and threatening. *"Your game is over! Before it is too late, you'd better mop up all your staff and LEAVE!"*

Gaston was for a moment paralyzed, but then his gun dropped from his hand, together with a bunch of keys, which he had held in his other hand and he promptly took to his heels. Dinah took up the keys, because she thought they'd come in handy, but the gun she left on the floor. She immediately returned to the corridor and ascended the flight of stairs to the third floor, wondering why she had said what she had said and why Gaston had suddenly given up so easily. She re-entered the long corridor of the West wing and returned to the guest room, where Hamid was already in full conversation with Maria on the phone.

"Ah, Dinah just returned safely," he said. "We'll have to come up with some plan how to get you safely out of Kenny's claws."

Dinah also heard the voice on the other side. "He is a very dangerous man. Eyes and ears everywhere, but when exposed, he might yield easily," said Maria.

"Well, we have the advantage of surprise now," said Hamid. "Do you know who has the key to your room?"

"Gaston always carries it with him," the thin voice sounded from the phone.

"Here they are!" said Dinah, throwing the keys of the estate into Hamid's lap.

"Hello Maria! It seems Dinah has already got the keys. Now, please call Michael, and let him contact all the others involved," said Hamid on the phone. "His number is in the phone's address book. We'll soon get you out."

"That is splendid, Hamid!" Maria said, closing the connection.

"How on earth did you get those keys?!" Hamid gasped.

"Stumbled on Gaston in Kenny's museum," she said proudly.

"Wha?" Hamid sighed in utter amazement.

"Don't worry, Hamid," said Dinah, "Gaston is a gentleman and I think he will keep his word and let himself and his staff off the hook. He knows the sincere look of a woman, who means what she says."

~

Still reading the ship's log of James Smolett in the early hours of the

morning, Michael had decided to keep his mobile phone close by, in case Hamid and Dinah would have any news from the Dordogne. Indeed at about three ‘o clock he was aroused from his readings by his favourite tune *Country Gardens*.

“Hullo? Who’s there?” he mumbled.

“It’s me, Maria!” a voice said on the other side.

“Maria? Is it really you?” asked Michael, jolting up from his bed in a fraction of a second.

“Yes, how are you?”

Now clearly recognising her voice he said: “Oh... I have been in a bad state for a while, but now I am already much better. Where the hell have you been?! We’ve all been worried sick!”

“First on Crete, then in France. I have been fairly well treated. No need to worry. My abductor gave me lots of space and time to do things. Can you believe that I’ve actually written a piano concerto! Only the fresh outside air and the sunshine were a bit limited.”

At this point Michael’s emotions got the better of him: “God! Maria! We’ve all missed you so dreadfully! We all thought you were dead!” he sobbed through the ether.

“Maybe my messages were a bit unclear at the time... my fault. In the end I thought that if I left behind that mirror as a little reminder, so you might have some idea to start looking for me.”

“No... I totally missed the message there, I’m sorry. I lend it to Dicky and he then gave it to Archie, and we got it back only recently. Are you really OK?”

“Yes, sure, I’ve not been so badly treated. At least the food was very good.”

“Still, I’m to blame... my own stupidity,” said Michael. “Believe it or not, but it was indeed the mirror that did it in the end, although in a way nobody could have anticipated. Also Hamid’s translations of the papers of Montanus took their time.”

“Ah, I should ask from Dinah and Hamid. That’s bizarre, Michael, but the most important thing is that you all found me in the end. Where

are you now?"

"I'm in Itea, with Pierce. We're trying to unravel the mystery of the Delphi site. We try to meet some people here. Ioannis Diamantopolis to start with and we'll try to get access to that secretive site the Americans have put up there."

"Ah, I would be very careful, Mike."

"Sure, aren't we always? Is there something I should know?"

"Only take care. President Sanders has reserved the place for some special purpose and nobody knows what. There are conspiracy theories in abundance, and there is a sticky rumour that all the gold of the Federal Reserve has been stored there, far below the ground."

"We haven't followed much of the news in Muirkirk. We have been living a quiet life in the old place."

"You stopped with the *Prancing Pony*?"

"Yes, I couldn't cope anymore... just sold the place!"

"I'm sorry to hear that. I will miss it."

"So, you're sure you can deal with that villain over there?"

"He is in the end only a henchman, a simple curator. He is dangerous, but I think we will manage. Dinah just dropped me her phone and I can try to reach some institutions and officials here and there. I think his game is over anyway. The Phoenix Syndicate is falling apart and we'll confront Kenny in the morning. We will talk more later on, but could you send me Marco's phone number, so I can tell him that I'm alive and well, and that I will soon be free to return?"

"Of course! I'll immediately send it and I'll inform Pierce and Sheila you're safe, and all the others. They will be overjoyed!"

"OK, that's great, Mike. Then I hope to see you all again soon!"

After scooping Marco Ferraris' mobile phone number and sending it to Maria, he rushed out to Pierce's neighbouring room. A drowsy face opened the door: "Has Maria been found?" he asked.

"Yes, Pierce!" said Michael. "Maria is alive! She was kept hostage in a French estate in the Dordogne."

"Well, that's the best news I've ever heard!" Pierce beamed.

9. Saturn

If malice or envy were tangible and had a shape, it would be the shape of a boomerang.

Charley Reese

THE next morning Hamid, Dinah and Maria were having an early breakfast in the library of Kenneth's imposing estate. They had started a bit early, so that Kenny came upon them in his morning housecoat. His head was still wobbly from the disastrous meeting with his bankers, which had taken till late in the night, and it had ended with threats to and fro. He was suddenly shaken out of his wits when he saw not only his two guests but also his secret prisoner at the breakfast table. Some ancient silver artefacts were elegantly scattered among the dishes, taken from his clandestine museum.

Kenny shouted: "How the devil did *you* get out?!"

"With the help of my friends," said Maria dryly.

"You *knew* she was here?" Kenny asked, looking coarsely at Hamid.

"I knew!" said Dinah.

"How?" Kenny asked.

"With this," said Dinah, and she raised the Persian mirror.

"And this," said Maria, who showed her own mirror.

"I don't understand," said Kenny.

"We were just discussing about these strange mirrors. They are the ones you took from the trunk, along with all these other things here. Have you forgotten?" said Maria.

"Oh, those," Kenny stammered.

"Please Kenny, have a seat and have some decent breakfast before the troops are marching in," said Hamid.

Kenny looked daggers at Hamid. "You *traitor!*" he growled.

"Don't call me names that are more aptly applicable to yourself, Kenny," said Hamid. "It doesn't suit you."

Consequently, Kenny sat himself down at the table and poured out some coffee. "Where is Gaston?" he asked.

"The servants have all been put on leave," said Maria. "They were, however, so polite to serve a last breakfast."

"Ah, I see," Kenny mumbled, "Then you all must have had a very busy night."

"Indeed. Will you please inform me what happened?" asked Hamid.

"When? ... Where?" Kenny muttered.

"What happened in Delphi five years ago, of course?"

"Ah... yes... Well... How can I tell you as shortly as I can? It all started when Benji Miller suddenly called me, out of the blue, in April 2016. He said he would soon travel from Madeira to Greece with a load of precious exhibits, among which was the famous Cross of Sharon. He asked me if that '*rings a bell*'. I said no, but he said it was truly something of a Tillock family matter. So, we agreed to meet up in Gibraltar. Once there he informed me that his travel companions were in earnest trying to restore the Oracle of Delphi by returning not only key artefacts, but also a genuine Pythia. I informed him that this restoration project was, in fact, a secret plan of our consortium to procure valuable items of ancient culture from rebels in many countries of the Middle East in exchange for the arms they needed. '*I know*,' he said, '*I'm at the other end of those deals!*' Then he told me that the only complication was their visit to Syria, where peace had been established and where the disarmament was in full swing, quite conflicting with the US operations. It appeared that he was assisting the secret services, and now was after a long time in a great position make ends meet."

"Why, Kenny! And then I had such a hard time getting some sort of decent peace in Syria," Hamid grumbled. "So it was you and Benjamin Miller who came up with some sort of antiquities-for-arms deal?"

Kenny passed a heavy sigh. "Indeed, Benji had actually been recruited to supervise the delivery of all the treasures to Delphi, and by a strange stroke of chance he had been in the very company of the persons who had the most crucial connections and artefacts in their possession. He bragged that '*God is clearly on our side?*'"

"There we have our traitor!" Maria cried.

“And a blasphemer!” Dinah added.

“Benji had connections in very high places. He could even arrange a Royal Navy escort for the shipments from Gibraltar,” said Kenny.

“But then things suddenly went wrong, didn’t they” asked Hamid.

“Yes, Benji suddenly disappeared, and the scheme in Syria failed by an uncalculated accident on the road to Damascus.”

“Evidently, God still watches over *that* road,” said Maria.

“Maybe you could put it that way. Nonetheless, since Benji was the coordinator, I got worried about the Delphi project, and then you, Hamid, suddenly visited me, asking about what was going on in Delphi, and whether it would be safe to donate the throne of Midas.”

“So I did.”

“I didn’t want to reveal my connections with Benji Miller, for obvious reasons, but I suddenly became aware that I needed all the eyes and ears in Delphi for seeing things through. So, that is why I pressed you so strongly to go and find out everything about the company of the Pythia.”

“Well, I told you what happened, but what did *you* do?”

“I was still awaiting Benji to contact us, and so I decided to go and travel to Delphi at the same time to find out how our plans were coming along. At first, it all seemed to be well on schedule. All the crucial elements were there. It was only still a question what the Pythia and her consorts were going to do and when. I was thinking of staying put there for a while. It was then on one evening that I met this army major. His name was Jack Clancy. He had had a bit too much to drink in the bar of our hotel, and he raved to me that he had been in pursuit of some sort of monster that had materialised near Damascus on a military base and had disappeared underground unveiling a whole system of tunnels deep under the ground. The story he told was so ludicrous, that I didn’t believe him in the least. Only when he revealed the identity of the persons involved in the events in Damascus, I realised he was telling the truth, because they were the same persons Benji had mentioned in Gibraltar. It appeared that the monster was

expelled from the military basis by the same person that had assumed the role of the Pythia, and the creature had set course towards Delphi... UNDERGROUND!"

"Hogwash!" cried Hamid.

"Oh, no, no! The major and most of his staff had pursued the monster all the way through a huge tunnel system, these were age old, and the monster had gone all the way to Delphi. They went there with a whole column of jeeps."

"Is that possible?" asked Dinah. "That's quite a stretch!"

"The Americans are a persevering lot. Truly, there had been odious fumes in the cave system, and the major smelled of sulphur quite strongly."

"So, what then?" asked Hamid.

"Well, through the major I learned that at the site of Delphi there were so many tunnels that the whole place was unstable. They anticipated a collapse any time soon. I feared that the whole Delphi project would be in jeopardy if everything would collapse. So, with the major I had to think of some emergency plan, otherwise our stream of arms would also be exposed. Initially he complained that his mission in Syria was just aimed at the opposite, namely to *disarm* Syria's rebels, but he was easily persuaded by a load of money and a promotion to general. So, we used the tunnel system to smuggle out all the antiquities into Syria, far outside the reach of the Greek authorities."

"Ah, but how about the collapse; how did Maria survive it and pass into *your* hands?" asked Hamid.

"The only thing I needed to do was to trigger a well planted set of explosives, while hiding in a bunker in the tunnel system. Then I had to wait until the dust had settled and follow with a jeep. However, before I could start my task, I noticed that someone had taken seat in the Adyton above our bunker. It was the makeshift Pythia who had seated herself on the tripod. She started to talk all kinds of gibberish and in the end she passed out due to the fumes. I had a gas mask and took her down into the bunker together with two soldiers. Then, I set off the

charges, and started making arrangements to leave. However, in the meantime she regained consciousness and attempted to escape. She ran through the tunnels to the bottom of the crater and made it just to the edge of the crater with us chasing her. Of course we couldn't leave her there. We were only with three and needed to improvise. All the others had already left through the tunnels in their jeeps and trucks hours before with the other stuff. So, we needed to take her with us."

"Where is all that stuff now?" asked Hamid.

"It's all *here* of course," said Kenny. "Why do you think I need such a big place in such a remote spot?"

"Like Fafner, guarding the hoard of the Nibelungen!" Dinah giggled. She was suddenly somewhat amused.

"You could put it that way," Kenny mumbled wryly. "You have seen it?"

"Yes, the large hall with Hamid's throne in the Middle," said Dinah.

"Then you only have seen half. There is more in the cellar."

"I suppose it is again all that deplorable ancient weaponry... your *own* collection?" asked Hamid.

"Only what was left. Not much. But we keep also gold reserves of some international banks here."

"Hmm. As we are trying to clean up loose ends here, you really never met John Armstrong?"

"No, Andy mentioned him as his benefactor once on the phone in the nineties, but more than that I really didn't know. Of course, it was in Gibraltar that Benji told me the whole story. Evidently, back in the 1980s, John was digging on Aird's Moss for ancient artefacts, but he had competition from a small club of other people: Richard McGregor, George Mackenzie and Freddy Smith. I was in Oxford, studying, but I had some contact with that group. They were mainly digging for old armoury from the Jacobite rebellions and such, close to my metier, and sometimes they needed my advice. I learned from Benji all the later facts: he blankly told me that the Cross of Sharon was our family's heritage. It was brought to Glasgow from Damascus by my ancestors,

and they revered it as a new covenant. It had enormous power, and it was planned as a new standard to further the cause of the Jacobites. But then all the treasures had been shipped away suddenly by the headman of the party, James Tillock, just before the battle of Culloden. It appeared that Andy was on the trail of my ancestors, but he was suddenly killed. Of course, we tried to retrieve the cross in Syria, but it failed. Benji went missing too, and I never knew what happened to him until you told me yesterday that he was hospitalised in Phrygia.”

“Indeed! What else did Benji tell you?” asked Hamid.

“Well, basically that the treasures of the Jacobites were stacked away in the house of an old friend of his, and that he had only found out recently. The most interesting part was that most of them were related to the older shrine of Cybele. He told me about two powerful axes that Richard and George had retrieved from Syria. That really infuriated me.”

“Why,” asked Hamid.

“They were an important missing part of *my* collection! It was *my* subject!” Kenny roared. “The legend holds that these axes were the tools that established the first real town, Eridu, at least so I was told in my early study time in Birmingham.”

“By whom?” asked Maria.

“My professor of anthropology. He was the successor of that anthropology professor that went missing, the one Benji told me that strange story about.”

“Also a strange coincidence! And you really didn’t know about this before?”

“No, cross my heart. Back in 2005, when Benji visited me in the monastery, he clearly wanted to know more about my family. With a grave expression he asked whether I was sure it was John Armstrong who was helping Andy on Madeira. I confirmed that I had no reason to doubt Andy. Then he didn’t ask any more questions, but decided to move to Madeira.”

“Indeed, because he knew that John Armstrong was officially dead,

so he was anxious to know what the hell was happening on Madeira,” said Hamid.

“Those axes you so revered ended up with Andy and Richard and they did a lot of harm,” said Maria. “With one of them Richard killed *my* father in Lockerbie, and years later in Funchal Andy nearly struck Richard with the same axe in a fit of revenge... on *my* conference party!!” Maria cried, slamming her hand on the table.

“Sorry to hear that. I didn’t know it at the time,” mumbled Kenny.
“So, John was your father?”

“No, my father was *Mathew* Armstrong, his twin brother! Richard killed the wrong man all those years back!”

“Well, I’m sorry!” said Kenny shaking his head demurely. “At that time I didn’t know about John, and certainly not that he had a twin brother. Richard I knew, but he never told me. He moved to the States. It was all in Gibraltar that Benji told me all the salient facts.”

“Well, you don’t need to talk to me anymore of your decrepit, ancient armour!” Maria cried.

Kenny’s face somewhat darkened. “Truly, this conversation with Benji on Gibraltar had a bit of an unexpected ending, when I asked about Andy. Benji as much confessed of having killed him. On Madeira he had indeed been looking for John Armstrong, who must have been living there under the name of Matheos Viglis, and - as Benji said - officially he must have been killed in the Lockerbie bombing. He told me the full story of what happened on Madeira, about the axes and all. In the night he had had a little conversation with Andy through the small window of the jail in the harbour, where he was kept after the axe incident. Accusations to and fro were exchanged, but Andy wasn’t forthcoming. In the end, Benji strangled him with his neck chain, and left him hanging on a window spoke. I became furious, of course, and I ran off. A bit later I realised I could better cooperate with him in this project, otherwise our whole venture would be over.”

Silence descended on the party.

“So, what revenge will you bestow on me?” Kenny finally asked

demurely.

“We only want our Pythia back, and some of her belongings,” said Hamid.

“How charming! The Gods claiming Freia back. Well, I suppose I can’t keep them both. So, you don’t want your valuable throne back, Hamid?” Kenny said, almost teasingly.

“We have a good replica. It suffices. Maybe you should have a really good look at the original, Kenny. I think you just have about one hour before your co-conspirators arrive. The police are also on the way, and I hope for your sake that the *Hand of the Law* will find you first.”

“We still want to know what happened to the coffin,” asked Maria.

“The Americans took it for research. Somehow they knew of its existence. However, they were a bit disappointed that they didn’t find a certain book that should have been in the trunk. They called it the Book of Life. It must have been of Egyptian origin.”

“Maybe then I can reveal to you that this book was indeed there, and that we have stored it in a safe place.”

“Well... then I think that I’ll finish my breakfast in all peace and quiet,” Kenny mumbled.

“I still want one honest answer, Kenny: Who planted that bomb in Bristol?” Hamid urged.

“Not my doing, Hamid. In the time, the head of the consortium decided upon the matter. I protested, but it was in vain. Our hitman Eugene Picard was hired for it.”

“But... why on earth would they kill a *clergyman!* That’s insane!!” Hamid exclaimed.

“He knew too much. He had been in contact with many high church officials about the impending matter. I really protested, many times. I explained to them he was an old study pal. They said not to worry. When I heard about the bombing of Bristol cathedral, I was steaming! However... I was too deeply involved. I was stuck. I couldn’t get out.”

“That’s the tight grip of the mob,” said Maria.

“You are despicable, Kenny. Worse than despicable! Not even worth to wring your neck!” said Hamid.

They ended slowly finished their victuals, eyes glancing all the time towards Kenny, who silently finished a cup of coffee but left his croissant untouched.

“I will take with me the lent copy of the *Tres Sainte Trinosophie*. I suppose you won’t mind,” Hamid said.

“No, of course not,” said Kenny, hardly audible.

“Of course that loan gave you away,” said Hamid.

“Have you already found *The Key?*” asked Maria.

“The Key? Of what?” Kenny mumbled.

“Of the Rosicrucians!” said Maria.

“Ah!” Kenny said. “No, I regret to say I haven’t.”

“Well, I have!” said Maria. “It is the trophy of the innocent prisoner. And now I have taken some stuff from your museum. They were, in fact, *my* property.”

“No problem,” said Kenny, inspecting swiftly a pair of silver Ibises, the pair of Persian mirrors, the silver flute and the silver harp. “You are, after all, an able musician, and they are worthless exhibits.”

~

When his guests had left, Kenny stared blankly at the lone croissant on his plate. ‘Where has Gaston gone to... and where the heck is my foie gras!?’ he grumbled, not further giving any conscious thought to his impending doom. He slowly rose from the table and walked through the library in the direction of the stairs that lead down to the servant’s quarters. Arriving in the kitchen, he found absolutely nothing in the fridge or the other storage rooms that was edible. Then he decided to inspect Gaston’s private quarters, because he still couldn’t quite believe his faithful butler had left without even a word. He found Gaston’s study in great disarray, papers strewn all over the place, windows and doors wide open. It was then that he became aware of a patch of the wainscoting being slightly ajar: it was a large secret door evidently giving entrance to a hidden room behind the study. He opened the

panel door further, and inspected the room: it was very spacious, and there were mainly cupboards with the house silverware, two large racks filled with wine bottles and a king size chest freezer. The thought of Gaston having had a secret store of which he knew nothing slowly filled him with anger. He took hold of the handle of the freezer, and turned the key that was in the lock to open the lid. Kenny wondered whether Gaston would have taken foodstuffs with him on his deceitful flight. What he saw first was an enormous leg of pork lying on top of various smaller packages. Kenny couldn't quite believe what he saw. Was that the pork Gaston had in mind for Christmas? He took a firm grip of the heavy leg, and raised it on top of a shelf about 3 feet right above the freezer. Then he dived with his head inside to inspect the contents that were deeper down. There were a dozen packages on the bottom of the freezer that caught his attention: it was his favourite brand of *Foie Gras*. His anger intensified into a hot rage. '*That IDIOT!*' Kenny growled, realizing that he might have eaten his favourite breakfast pate all those years from the freezer, which of course was the greatest offense. Reaching deep into the chest, just about to take hold of one parcel, the huge leg of pork had just melted enough. Silently it slipped off the high shelf and hurled down hitting the back of Kenny's head. It had taken up considerable momentum and Kenny's lights went out in an instant. He then completely disappeared inside the freezer, and due to the sudden shock the lid of the freezer came down and slammed into its lock. The key jumped out and fell to the ground. A few minutes later, a sudden gush of wind swept through Gaston's quarters. It swept up the papers, and the secret panel door of the wainscoting slammed in its lock.

Fifteen years were to pass before the secret stowage room was re-discovered by later owners, who had turned the estate into a reputed hotel. They had painstakingly traced an electricity leak in the mansion to the location of Gaston's former quarters, and managed to open the secret door in the wall panelling. They found the storage room with the chest freezer. The freezer had done its task all these years faithfully, but

its power requirements had grown to notable levels. It was then that the mystery of the disappearance of Kenneth Tielock was finally solved. They found him amazingly well-preserved, together with the leg of pork and the parcels of *foie gras*. The most valuable discovery for the hotel, however, was the wine collection.

In his small hotel room, after all the calls, Michael had had a few restless moments trying to get some sleep, but it didn't come, and he decided to read further in the captain's log of the *Ondine*. However, after a few minutes he spontaneously fell asleep. At eight 'o clock Pierce knocked on Michael's door. He was anxious to have breakfast. After shaving, Michael's phone rang; it was Maria again.

"We've safely escaped," she said, "Kenny was very cooperative in the end."

"That's great!" said Michael. "What is going to happen to him?"

"Difficult to say! When we left, there was a small row of black limousines waiting outside the porch. They didn't bother us, but there were some stern looking men in black stepping out. However, I also informed the police of what likely was going to happen, and they had taken position a bit further away. So, we should watch the news."

"Gosh, Maria. I cannot wait until we meet again."

"Yes, but take care Michael. If you dive too deep in the affairs of the syndicate you might get yourself in danger, no joke. This major Clancy has not been idle. He is a prominent general now and he is in charge of one of their biggest projects. I don't exactly know all the details, but they are exploring a huge network of ancient underground tunnels. Kenneth was also involved with the Americans in Delphi. They have outwitted not only all of us, but also Pytho, and that is going to cost them dearly sooner or later. Another point of caution: they seem to be aware of the existence of that Egyptian book. I hope you have kept it well!"

"Yes, I have it secured. Nobody has seen it or heard of it."

"OK. Then we may stand a chance. Well done, Michael!"

"You're sure? It has been heavy on my mind, this secret. Can't I tell anybody? Not even Sheila?"

"What do you think, Michael? Has anything changed in this respect? These things are much too dangerous."

"Well. I would like to tell Pierce, because it has given me some pains to be so secretive with him."

"Pierce is OK; highly dependable. I'll hang now. We are on the road to Paris. Marco has taken the first available flight. We'll pick him up, and then go to Troyes. After that we hope to join you somewhere. I have now also retrieved Mnemosyne's other silver items."

"What would be the best place to keep them?" said Michael.

"I propose we give them to the Delphi Museum."

"OK! Keep them safe, Maria!"

Pierce had been standing just outside waiting, and Michael joined him down to the hotel restaurant. They listlessly gathered some foodstuffs on their plates and sat down. Pierce took mostly fruits and yogurt, Michael bacon and eggs with fried tomato slices.

"Well," Michael started. "They all have made a safe escape from the Dordogne. Maria just called again. Hope there will soon be some news."

"I still feel bedazzled... so annoyed! Couldn't sleep the whole night! Just can't believe it! Maria, five years a hostage of such a jerk! Unbelievable!" Pierce whined with a full mouth.

"She said they call themselves the *Phoenix Syndicate*."

"Phoenix Syndicate... Hmm."

"And they killed Phillip Chance."

"No!" Pierce cried.

"I just wonder why they didn't do away with Maria. There must have been a special reason for them to keep her hostage."

"Because she was the Pythia, perhaps. Maybe it brings bad luck to kill a Pythia," Pierce said with a slightly roguish glance.

"Yes, and then it seems Benjamin Miller has outwitted us all."

"How?" said Pierce with a blank expression.

“For one, he killed Andy right under my nose in the Madeira gaol!”

“Blast!”

“That traitor!” Michael exclaimed.

“I’m sorry, Mike. Really sorry!”

“Well... Now I can also tell you something about the secret.”

“What secret?”

“The one I promised Maria to keep.”

“Oh... Well... I’m all ears.”

“Shortly, it’s about a book. It is written on pages of silver foil, and they were bound together by golden rings.”

“And... You have it?”

“Yes, Maria gave it to me to keep. She had taken it out of the trunk of Mnemosyne already some time before they cleared out the cellar after the flood. As a matter of fact, I originally found that book when I opened the trunk back in 2005. At first, it didn’t attract my attention, but Maria thought it was the most revealing part of the treasure.”

“So, the obvious question: what is the book about?”

“The scripture is unknown, and it is full of pictures, some of which resemble the Tarot cards. There are also lots of images of flowers and trees that resemble the Paisley patterns, and planets and stars, and text written in an unknown cypher.”

“You mean something like the Voynich manuscript?”

“No, the whole work is plainly Egyptian. Voynich appears to be early Ottoman, actually.”

“Ah... and Maria thought you should keep it safe?”

“Yes, she asked me to keep it hidden as long as necessary.”

“As long as *necessary*...” Pierce stressed. “Isn’t that a bit vague?”

“Well, I saw no reason to reveal it to anyone.”

“Where is the book now?” asked Pierce.

“I hid it at our attic in Muirkirk, after we cleaned the place last autumn.”

“Is that safe enough?”

“I think so. Only Maria and I know about the book.”

“Don’t you want the book to be researched, and translated?”

“I don’t think that it is wise. It really is not a simple matter. The book can be potentially dangerous in the wrong hands.”

“How do you know? Aren’t you a scientist? Don’t you want to know?”

“Some American anthropologists have speculated about its existence, and the Yankees are always ready to make their hands dirty with things they don’t understand. I agree with Maria that it should be kept away. I don’t know what it reveals. I guess it could be even genetic codes, music, ancient histories, anything. There are some pictures of intertwined tree branches that clearly resemble DNA molecules.”

“The RNA hypothesis all over?”

“Who knows!”

“Well, that is something I must leave to you to decide,” Pierce said.

“We may need to make up our minds quite soon, because the Americans are not idle. It seems that our swarthy army major in Syria was not easily deterred by appearances. They have made work of it: they’ve been tracking down our foe.”

“Major Clancy, you mean?”

“General Clancy now,” said Michael. “They are exploring a huge network of ancient tunnels far below the earth’s surface.”

“O dear, oh dear, oh dear! They really have gone underground now, haven’t they?” Pierce said, shaking his head uneasily.

Both men finished their breakfast in all peace and quiet, and at nine ‘o clock in the morning they were duly waiting in the tiny hotel lobby for their old acquaintance, Ioannis Diamantopolis. He had been the original investigator and re-creator of the Delphi site, but had been demoted after the earthquake to the role of caretaker of the Delphi museum, a building that had not suffered any great damage during the so-called ‘great collapse’. Michael and Pierce only had a faint recollection of him. Ioannis had been highly sceptical at the time of the attempts by various parties to re-install the sacred oracle at Delphi, and was quite unwilling to play any further role in the affair. It had taken a

long phone call by Michael to convince him of the necessity of a meeting. Michael now wondered if he could be of any help, but they had to start somewhere.

A pudgy figure in a yellow-orange T-shirt entered the lobby of the hotel. The individual was looking around in apprehension of a rendezvous.

"Here, mister Diamantopolis!" Michael hooted from the opposite corner of the lobby. The man instantly raised his hand, and stepped forward.

"Mister Farnell and Mister Willmore, I presume," said Ioannis.
"Long time no see!"

"Very decent of you to come," said Michael.

"I have not much time, the museum opens at ten, and I have to be there half an hour earlier. Where shall we talk?"

"Maybe we can have a walk along the beach," Michael prompted.

They went outside and soon scuffled through the loose sand on the beach.

"I had some hopes to recall with you what happened five years ago," said Michael. "After that we would like to know what happened later on the site of Delphi. Especially the activities of the Americans are of some interest to us."

"I do not know what the Americans are doing in Delphi. The place is as secretive as Area 51," said Ioannis.

"But what's their interest in the first place? When did they arrive there?"

"Two days after the collapse," said Ioannis.

"Already one day after we had gone back to look for our companion?"

"Your so-called Pythia," Ioannis sneered.

"Yes, you were there too. We found nothing, only a silver mirror."

"I remember the mirror and a huge gaping hole in the ground," said Ioannis. "Already the next day the Americans came in. They sealed off the whole area. I was not allowed in the area anymore. Since then I've

been working in the museum, as I told you on the phone.”

“OK. Ever seen any of these Americans in the museum, or elsewhere?”

“Some visit the museum regularly, but they are not at liberty to tell anything.”

“Ever met General Clancy, the head-nob?”

“Yes, yes, he visits regularly. Sometimes he has his lunch in the museum restaurant.”

“Would he be there today?” asked Michael.

“Quite possible, yes,” Ioannis confirmed. “He is not a man to cross.”

“We’ve crossed his path before,” said Michael. “We know him.”

“Oh, wherefrom?” asked Ioannis.

“An army depot in Syria,” said Michael. “So, what is happening over there in the ancient Delphi Area?”

“I do not know anything specific, but heavy vehicles come in and out of the place every so often. Then there are many months and nothing happens,” Ioannis explained.

“Any idea what they are bringing in, or out?” Michael asked.

“It looks like they carry in heavy instruments and heavy building materials. One day I saw in an open truck something that looked like a set of huge mirrors. They really looked expensive.”

“Mirrors? Are you sure?”

“Yes, I overheard they are building something... they called it LEGO.”

“You mean like the plastic building toys?” Michael asked.

“Well, it is an abbreviation: they are measuring gravitational waves, whatever that would mean.”

Then Pierce explained: “You mean LIGO, the observation of gravitational waves by laser interferometry!”

Michael looked perplexed. “Why on earth would they like to measure gravitational waves underground? That makes no sense.”

“Listen, folks,” Ioannis said. “I need to go to work today. The

museum opens at ten, and I have to be there.”

“OK. That’s fine,” said Michael. “We will come with you and look a bit around, if it is not inconvenient for you.”

“If you pay your entrance fee, I’m fine,” said Ioannis.

“Uhm... we may soon donate some nice old treasures from Delphi to your museum. They are pretty old.”

“Oh? What are they?”

“Two Ibises, two mirrors, a flute, a sistrum and a lyre,” said Michael. “Anyway, I don’t think we need to go inside the museum today. We’ll have a look at the Delphi site.”

Ioannis shrugged his shoulders. “Not really anything to see there!”

~

Hamid was driving his spacious camper in all tranquillity on the motorway towards Paris. Maria had got into contact with Marco, who was just then in Funchal boarding his flight to Paris. He was eager to meet his wife, and he shortly explained to her his five years of desolation and doubt. It had been a situation heavy to bear for the otherwise so self-confident policeman. Maria’s fate at Delphi had plunged him at times into deep fits of depression and heavy drinking. Some therapy, however, had helped him on his feet again. He had resumed his police work, and was presently chief super-intendent of the Funchal constabulary.

Maria and Dinah were relaxing inside the camper with hot coffee and almond cake. They first discussed about their married lives, the ups and downs at the Royal court of Phrygia, and finally their common goals to resolve the remaining mysteries of Delphi.

“Is there anything you can tell us further about Benjamin Miller and Kenneth Tillock,” Hamid asked.

“That’s really an awkward story,” Maria started. “It all goes back to the year when that American plane crashed on Lockerbie. Benjamin Miller was investigating the case, a bit on the side, but in the course of events he came to know that Sheila’s father, John Armstrong, got killed near a bus stop just outside Lockerbie. Now, Benji Miller knew all

about John Armstrong and his twin brother Mathew from my mother. Her name was Anna-Sofia Guttman and she had a barber shop in the centre of Birmingham. As you know, persons in such a profession as my mother had learned all sorts of things about the local residents. Before I was born, the two Armstrong brothers frequented her hair shop, and had both a fairly close relationship with her. As things went, it all came to a point where Mathew had a fierce row with his father over my mother. He had wanted to marry her, but his father, John Armstrong senior, was against it and threatened his son in no unclear terms. You should understand that Mathew's father was known in Birmingham under the nickname *Prester John*, and he was a fiery Presbyterian who had a highly deriding view of Catholics. As a result, Mathew left home angrily and nobody ever knew where he'd gone. Two months later it was discovered that my mother was pregnant, and then it was John junior's turn to have a terrible row at his parental house. John senior plainly ordered an abortion. However, John junior stood up against his father: He said Catholics view abortion as a mortal sin, and he decided to smuggle my mother out of the country to have the child somewhere else. His comrade in arms was his anthroposophy teacher from Birmingham University, who proposed Itea in Greece."

Maria took a sip of the excellent Persian coffee. "My mother didn't like that professor very much, because he was an atheist, but the three somehow got along quite well in Greece for the remaining seven months of mother's pregnancy. Then, when one day they were visiting the ancient site of Delphi, she slipped on the steps of the Temple and there on that spot I was born. After that event, my mother returned to England and raised me without ever informing me who my father was. She also never told me about the two friends who accompanied her. However, eighteen years later, at the time I was studying chemistry in Birmingham, Benjamin Miller became a frequent visitor of my mother's hair shop, and got on very confidential terms with her, and soon Benji knew all about what had happened in Delphi, more than I ever got to know. He was a regular policeman in that time, in his early thirties,

handsome and strong, and stayed on as an old friend of my mother, and when I studied the piano in Birmingham in the eighties he occasionally dropped in to inquire about how I was doing. We saw each other on regular terms also after I moved to Madeira. However, Benji had a secret of his own, which he shared with my mother: he had set his eyes on the much younger wife of the anthroposophy professor. She was called Hildegard, and was of German origin. The professor was not treating her very well: he was an authoritarian German professor of the old guard, and thus Benji and Hildegard made a plan to remove him out of their way. Hildegard was of outstanding beauty, and she had made plans with Benji to have her husband killed in a very uncommon way. In principle, Hildegard could do it all herself, but she needed Benji's help from the side of the authorities."

"Holy Smoke!" Hamid exclaimed. "What a brutal conspiracy!"

"So, what was the story?" asked Dinah.

"I will tell you later, but the case appears to be even more complicated. As Kenneth Tiloch told me, after getting rid of the professor, Hildegard had settled in Chania, and Benji was visiting her regularly. By some strange stroke of chance, one day Benji had run into Mathew Armstrong in a jewellery shop in Chania where he was known as Matheos Viglis. Benji quickly noticed that he was from the Midlands, so they got along very well in the beginning. They shared an interest in archaeology, and already quite soon Benji found out that the man must be the secret lover of my mother and thus must be my father. It was only then that Mathew learned he had a daughter."

"So, all the time Benji knew who your father was, and even came to know where he lived, and never bothered to tell you?" asked Dinah.

"Indeed, that was initially very heavy to bear," Maria sighed. "I had to hear the whole story from Kenneth Tiloch, a complete stranger who had kidnapped me."

"What a dreadful humiliation!" Dinah cried.

"Well, I pondered about that a lot in these five desolate years. Kenny told me that he was merely keeping me safe. He had made a

pledge to Benji in Gibraltar that he should do everything in his power to keep me out of harm's way.”

“But... why?” asked Dinah.

“Kenny said that their main objective was the preservation of ancient culture out of the hands of barbarians. I had become an integral part of this because of the special circumstances of my birth. The German professor had remarked to my mother - more in jest than in earnest - that now that I was born in ancient Delphi on the steps of the main temple, I was the last eligible Pythia and should be regarded as a rare historical artefact.”

“The crooked logic of the criminal!” Hamid laughed.

“The ways people get into crime are variegated. Benji had already conspired in a murder, and had started to bring in all kinds of illegally acquired assets from the Middle East into Europe via Crete. Unwittingly, Mathew sold much of his gems in his shop in Chania, but over time he grew suspicious. So, he decided to visit Benji in his own house and confront him over a few dubious pieces. He had even found some evidence that such operations had been going on for extended periods of time, with evidence related to a branch of the Tilloch family. However, when he visited Benji, he recognised instantly Hildegard from the Birmingham University days. On his first visit he was on his guard, but he made inquiries at the Birmingham police office. He learned that Hildegard’s husband had mysteriously disappeared and that the case was still open. He returned and questioned Benji and Hildegard, and upon hearing the vein-chilling story a serious fight ensued. As a result, Hildegard fled to the monastery of Gonia Odigitria, where she found refuge. Mathew decided to go back to England to find out more about the Tillochs and his own family. He attended even one of my concerts and there he had success on both accounts: he ran into the best friend of his brother John, Andy Tielock, who was quite aware of the urgency of having a meeting about Mathew’s complicated affairs. This meeting took place in Lockerbie just before the plane crash. They spent a long afternoon discussing the salient events in a pub. Mathew

made the decision to sell his business as soon as he would arrive back in Chania, and he stressed the importance of protecting the monastery, which had become the object of covert attacks by Benji's co-conspirators. Unfortunately, as you have heard from Michael and Sheila, Mathew got killed, and Andy and John were forced to take drastic action. John tried as much as possible to save the situation on Crete. When he arrived in Chania and assumed his brother's identity, he sold his shop and moved to Plataniás, keeping a low profile as a sheep herder under the name Matheos Dekalogos. He must have lived there in great isolation, his only contacts being at the monastery. There he spent his time largely with finishing his thesis and with his abundant funds he helped the monastery to move to India. After this he travelled with Hildegard to various places in the East. Unfortunately, the monastery was sold to a person linked to the Tilloch family and Benji was put back on the track of John through Kenny. In the 1990's he heard from Kenneth that John was helping Andy on Madeira, and he noticed there must be a flaw in the investigation surrounding the death of Mathew Armstrong. He visited Madeira regularly, but only in 2005 Benji got a pressing reason to locate Hildegard: the dead professor was found, and the case was re-opened. He needed a witness and he desperately sought her out on Madeira, where she had family. He found her in the end, but John Armstrong remained out of his grip. John kept good watch over the situation and soon moved to Damascus."

"We are exhausted and our vehicle is also quite out of fuel," said Hamid with a deep sigh and he pulled over to a gas station with an attractive restaurant.

~

At slightly before ten o'clock, Ioannis had made his way already to the Delphi archaeological museum in his old truck in the company of Michael and Pierce. During the drive, Ioannis had not been able to give more information about the US facility. When they arrived, Michael and Pierce beheld with awe the huge crater in which the larger part of the ancient site of Delphi had disappeared. It was bordered by a sturdy

fence all around. Ioannis had opened the doors of the museum and a few visitors already gained entrance. Michael walked around the museum with Pierce to have a closer look at the site. There was a huge gate on the same driveway, and behind it loomed a very high round tower, made of rings of grey concrete, and placed in the middle of the crater. In front of the entry gate they remained for a while inspecting the site which had been the subject of a plethora of conspiracy theories. On the bottom of the crater a few small buildings could be discerned, and a steel bridge gave access to the tower. Presently not a soul was seen within the closed premises.

“Almost like the *Tower of the Elephant*,” said Pierce.

“From Conan the Cimmerian, you mean?” mumbled Michael.

“Yes.”

“Funny that you should mention that.”

“All this doesn’t look very funny to me,” said Pierce. “What the hell are the Yankees doing here?”

“I have only a vague idea,” said Michael. “Was that story of Bob Howard not about a magic stone?”

“Yeah, the *Heart of the Elephant*”.

“Indeed... Hmm... so how did that story go? Our high school years are already so long ago.”

“I actually read it again last summer in its original form,” said Pierce, “You don’t remember? With *Yara* the sorcerer and *Yag-Kosha* his prisoner?”

“Well, the film adaptation was a bit different, I recall.”

“Quite different, indeed!” Pierce nodded. “That was a great disappointment.”

“So, how did the original story go?”

“Well, the story is set in Zamoria, in the thief city Arenjun where the young Conan is drinking in a noisy tavern, and he overhears somebody describing the *Heart of the Elephant*, a famous jewel, which is kept in the tower by Yara, an evil sorcerer. Yara keeps a spell over the region of Zamoria, having once turned the Crown Prince into a black spider and

then crushed it under his foot. When Conan presses the rogue for more information, a fight ensues in the tavern, and Conan manages to kill the rogue in the dark. He then decides to reclaim the jewel. He enters Yara's garden and runs into another rogue called Taurus, who is known as the *Prince of Thieves*. He has the same plan and he joins Conan's quest. First, they battle some lions in the lower garden surrounding the tower, and then they climb up to the summit with a rope and boat-hook that Taurus has brought with him. On the top, Taurus instructs Conan to keep watch, and he enters the first treasure hall. There Taurus is instantly killed by the poison of a gigantic spider. Conan enters and becomes committed in a desperate battle with the spider, which he finally crushes with a chest of gems. Then he continues the search for the great jewel, the *Heart of the Elephant*. Further inside the tower, he discovers a monstrous being with the huge head of an elephant and the body of a man: He is Yag-Kosha, the prisoner of Yara. He is blind and tortured, but when he finds out about Conan's intentions, he is favourably disposed to him and relates to him the legend of his alien people: As it turns out, they arrived on earth from the very distant planet Yag. He says: '*Oh man, Listen! I am foul and monstrous to you, am I not? Nay, do not answer; I know! But you would seem as strange to me, could I see you. There are many worlds besides this earth, and life takes many shapes. I am neither God nor Demon, but flesh and blood like yourself, though the substance differ in part, and the form be cast in a different mold.*'"

"You *do* impress me, Pierce!"

"Well, Aunt Ginny always pressed me to become an actor, so..."

"I know, Pierce, but... the story, please... how did it go on?"

"I cannot go on further in quotes, but to keep it short: Yag-Kosha relates the arrival of his species on Earth from the far planet Yag. They had warred with the Kings of Yag, and were defeated and expelled. Thus, they swept through space on mighty wings faster than light, but once on earth their wings withered and they could not return. They encountered strange and terrible life forms, likely the pre-cataclysmic dinosaurs, which they fought and they took refuge in the Eastern

jungles. They saw the coming and going of many civilisations until the dawn of the accursed Zamoria. There, Yag-Kosha instructed Yara in the art of magic, but Yara was more cunning and turned against him. At Yara's behest, he built the tower, in one night, and then was made prisoner in it. He bids Conan to free him, so that he may become Yogah of Yag again. Conan drives his sword deep into Yag-Kosha's body. Then, he takes his heart, mercifully killing the hybrid man-elephant creature. As instructed, he drips its blood over the jewel, and sees it is absorbed into the stone, thus forming the *Heart of the Elephant*. Then he descends the stairs and counters Yara. Yara is under the influence of opium, but Conan awakes him, and presents him with the stone. Through the powers of the blood-infused jewel, Yara shrinks and is drawn finally into the jewel. Inside appears Yogah, the revived Yag-Kosha with his limbs and wings restored. He pitilessly pursues Yara, and the jewel vanishes."

At that point, the horn of a car was heard, and Michael and Pierce turned around. A dusty jeep had stopped before the entrance of the area, and they recognized the tanned face of General Jack Clancy.

"Morning!" said Michael cheerfully.

"Get out of the way!" the General complained after rolling down the window. Michael stepped forward. "May I have a word?"

"Shove off! We are not..." he suddenly stopped in the middle of his sentence, raised his forefinger, and said: "Aren't you that bloke I met in Syria some five years back?"

"Michael Willmore, at your service!"

"Ah, it *is* you. What the hell are you doing here?"

"Hope to give you some clues to your investigation down there in the underground world. I also need some information from you."

"You must be kidding!" Clancy chuckled. "Five years ago you were a serious pain in the ass. Why do you think I'll be interested?"

"Investigating gravitational fields below the earth's surface is a bit difficult to keep secret. Scientists peep in every corner, you know!"

"Listen, we are perfectly fine. No need for help from outsiders. We

have plenty of scientists here.” The gate had opened silently in the meantime, and Clancy made an attempt to drive on, but Michael insisted.

“First point: I’m no outsider. Second point: you are in great peril if you proceed on the course you have taken.”

“Don’t be ridiculous!” Clancy jeered.

Pierce had also appeared in the window. “This is urgent,” he underlined.

“Oh, you have also brought your old pall, I see! What information can you give me?” said the General.

“Any idea if some of the objects of the Adyton have been preserved?” asked Michael. “For instance, is the Omphalos stone still intact?”

“I don’t think so; most of the Adyton went down into the deep. We have not been able to reach so low yet,” said Clancy.

“So, you are still looking for Pytho? After all this time?”

“Well, if you refer to that dragon, he has dug himself in very deep.”

“And you try to locate Him by means of the gravitational field?” asked Michael.

“Indeed, how do you know that?”

“Simple inference, dear General. You don’t remember the pit in which you first found that ring?”

“At Inventura Plc, Yes.”

“Never wondered how it could have come there?”

“I thought some bloke just lost it there.”

“Wrong! It *ate* its way... all the way down the fundaments of the building,” said Michael, “and after I augmented it, it has done the same all over again: it has eaten itself through the earth and formed all these tunnels. That is the cause of the displacement of mass, which you are trying to detect.”

“Well, I suppose you are making an educated guess, but that’s not quite in concordance with our present state of knowledge,” said Clancy.

“So, have you spotted Him?” asked Michael.

“Pytho lies in a spot about eight kilometres down from the original location of the Adyton. It is more a physical phenomenon than a creature, really.”

“Unfortunately you have cheated this phenomenon out of its legitimate inheritance. I would not disturb it, if I were you.”

“Which inheritance do you mean?”

“The one you looted with the Syndicate!” said Michael.

“Did I now?” the General uttered.

“The Syndicate is going to be exposed, if not today then tomorrow. Better take care, General! Now we are faced with the problem of subduing Pytho.”

“And how do you think of catching him?” General Clancy scoffed.
“With a net?”

“Something like it, yes. Just call me when you need me!” Then Michael waved his hand and abruptly strode off.

Pierce followed in his wake. When they stepped up the stairs to the museum, he asked: “Why did you suddenly give in so easily?”

“I’m really happy you came up with that story. We pensioners aren’t quite of the same stuff as Conan and Taurus, are we?!”

“Indeed, and we also forgot to bring a rope and boat hook!” Pierce laughed.

“Hmm... Is that sistrum still lying idle in your window sill?” asked Michael.

“Indeed it is,” said Pierce, with questioning glance.

Michael looked back playfully.

“No! Are you serious?” said Pierce.

“Now is not the time. We must have some patience,” said Michael.

10.

Academic Interludium III

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5. Modern Theosophy

Roots in Hermeticism



earching for the fundamental motivations of modern Theosophy, we should at this point swiftly return to H. P. Blavatsky, the founder of the Theosophical Society. As already indicated at the end of the last chapter, Theosophy and Theology - in the same sense as astronomy and astrology - are not synonymous. In the spirit of John Bunyan (*'Religion is the best armour that man can have, but it is the worst cloak'*), H. P. Blavatsky objected to the common prejudice that the Theosophical Society was seen as a kind of 'church' or even a new 'sect'. She pronounced that the most devoted adherents of theosophy were, in fact, recruited from the ranks of agnostics and materialists. In the fourth number of *Lucifer*, in an open letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, she wrote:

'We make use of an open letter to your Grace as a vehicle to convey to you, and through you, to the clergy, to their flocks, and to Christians generally - who regard us as the enemies of Christ - a brief statement of the position which Theosophy occupies in regard to Christianity, as we believe that the time for making that statement has arrived.'

'Your Grace is no doubt aware that Theosophy is not a religion, but a philosophy at once religious and scientific; and that the chief work, so far, of the Theosophical Society has been to revive in each religion its own animating spirit, by encouraging and helping enquiry into the true significance of its doctrines and observances.'

'Theosophists know that the deeper one penetrates into the meaning of the dogmas and ceremonies of all religions, the greater becomes

their apparent underlying similarity, until finally a perception of their fundamental unity is reached. This common ground is no other than Theosophy - the Secret Doctrine of the ages - which, diluted and disguised to suit the capacity of the multitude, and the requirements of the time, has formed the living kernel of all religions. The Theosophical Society has branches respectively composed of Buddhists, Hindoos, Mahomedans [sic], Parsees, Christians, and Freethinkers, who work together as brethren on the common ground of Theosophy - and it is precisely because Theosophy is not a religion, nor can for the multitude supply the place of a religion, that the success of the Society has been so great, not merely as regards its growing membership and extending influence, but also in respect to the performance of the work it has undertaken - the revival of spirituality in religion, and the cultivation of the sentiment of BROTHERHOOD among men.”^{<42>}

The theosophists made the return to the more inclusive philosophies of older times their main cause, and the recovery of the ‘spirituality that was lost’ their main objective. Blavatsky thus wrote in her *Isis Unveiled*:

*“The whole question of phenomena [as experienced by the spiritualists] rests on the **correct comprehension of old philosophies**. Whither, then, should we turn, in our perplexity, but to the ancient sages, since, on the pretext of superstition, we are refused an explanation by the modern? Let us ask them what they know of genuine science and religion; not in the matter of mere details, but in all the broad conception of these twin truths - so strong in their unity, so weak when divided. Besides, we may find our profit in comparing this boasted modern science with ancient ignorance; this improved modern theology with the ‘secret doctrines’ of the ancient universal religion. Perhaps we may thus discover a neutral ground whence we can reach and profit by both... It is the old Platonic philosophy, the most elaborate compend of the abstruse systems of old India that can alone afford us this middle ground...”^{<43>}*

The theosophists held on to that nobler resource to the understanding of the Divine, namely that of the inner spiritual experience, and much less to the dogmatisms of written revelation, despite the fact that these were also derived from inner experience in earlier times. Theosophy and religion share some precepts, but theosophy is more concerned (as philosophy is) with deliberations *about* the spiritual (and God), while religion is more concerned with *submission to* God, meaning the church, and those who run it. A main proponent of the theosophical argument was Jesus of Nazareth, who in his days called on revolt against submission to unwarranted authority. The theosophical stance, therefore, holds more ground than that of religion. It does not present any dogmatic immutable picture of the Divine, but allows for a searching approach, and seeks to align itself with Science, not to oppose it. It is therefore not surprising that during the Scottish Enlightenment the theosophical undercurrents gained momentum and religion was in crisis, mostly in the form of the internecine religious wars between Scotland and England. The theosophists were less happy with the dispersion of science in its carefully guarded disciplines, and held on to the tenets of Platonic philosophy. It is, however, the Hermetic literature that forms the basis of the Platonic world view, so shortly we return to this subject.

The Corpus Hermeticum

The surviving fragments of the *Corpus Hermeticum* are not generally taught in our schools, a pitiful fact indeed, because if only the *Vision of Hermes* would have been included in our curriculum, we would have at least been more acquainted with abstract concepts and with an account of creation that would have neatly supplemented that of the biblical creation story. As we shall soon see in the next chapter, it also enlightens the *Theory of Forms* of Plato and the ‘hidden variables’ theory we here try to propose for the emanation of life.

So we embark on a concise tour of the *Hermetic Principles*, taking Shure's version of the *Vision of Hermes* in his Egyptian dress, and in slightly modernised form:

'One day, Hermes, after reflecting on the origin of things, fell asleep. A dull torpor took possession of his body; but in proportion as the latter grew benumbed, his spirit ascended into space. Then an immense being, of indeterminate form, seemed to call him by name.'

"Who are you?" said the terrified Hermes.

"I am Osiris, the sovereign Intelligence who is able to unveil all things. What do you desire?"

"To behold the source of beings, O divine Osiris, and to know God."

"You will be satisfied."

Immediately Hermes felt himself plunged in a delicious light. In its pellucid billows passed the ravishing forms of all beings. Suddenly, a terrifying encircling darkness descended upon him. Hermes was in a humid chaos, filled with smoke and with a heavy, rumbling sound. Then a voice rose from the abyss, the cry of light. At once a quick-leaping flame darted forth from the humid depths, reaching to the ethereal heights. Hermes ascended with it, and found himself again in the expanse of space. Order began to clear up chaos in the abyss; choruses of constellations spread above his head and the voice of light filled infinity.

"Do you understand what you have seen?" said Osiris to Hermes, bound down in his dream and suspended between earth and sky.

"No," said Hermes.

"You will now learn. You have just seen what exists from all eternity. The light you did see first is the divine intelligence which contains all things in potentiality, enclosing the models of all beings. The darkness in which you were afterwards plunged is the material world on which the men of earth live. But the fire shooting

forth from the depths, which you look upon, is the divine Word. God is the Father, the Word is the son, and their union is Life."

"*What marvellous sense has opened out to me?*" asked Hermes. "*I no longer see with the eyes of the body, but with those of the spirit. How has that come to pass?*"

"*Child of dust,*" replied Osiris, "*it is because the Word is in you. That in you who hears, sees, and acts is the Word itself, the sacred fire, the creative utterance!*"

"*Since things are so,*" said Hermes, "*grant that I may see the light of the worlds; the path of souls from which man comes and to which he returns.*"

"*Be it done according to your desire.*"

Hermes became heavier than a stone and fell through space like a meteorite. Finally he reached the summit of a mountain. It was night, the earth was gloomy and deserted, and his limbs seemed as heavy as iron.

"*Raise your eyes and look!*" said the voice of Osiris.

Then Hermes saw a wonderful sight. The starry heavens, stretching through infinite space, enveloped him with seven luminous spheres. In one glance, Hermes saw the seven heavens stretching above his head, tier upon tier, like seven transparent and concentric globes, the sidereal centre of which he now occupied. The Milky Way formed the girdle of the last. In each sphere there rolled a planet accompanied by a Genius of different form, sign, and light.

Whilst Hermes, dazzled by the sight, was contemplating their wide-spread efflorescence and majestic movements, the voice said to him: "Look, listen, and understand. You see the seven spheres of all life. Through them is accomplished the fall and ascent of souls. The seven Genii are the seven rays of the Word-Light. Each of them commands one sphere of the Spirit, one phase of the life of souls. The one nearest to you is the Genius of the Moon, with his disquieting smile and crown of silver sickle. He presides over births and deaths, sets free souls from bodies and draws them into his ray.

Above him, does pale Mercury there not point out the path to ascending or descending souls with his caduceus, which contains all Knowledge?

Higher still, shining Venus holds the mirror of Love, in which souls forget and recognise themselves in turn?

Above her, the Genius of the Sun raises the triumphal torch of eternal Beauty.

At a yet loftier height, Mars brandishes the sword of Justice.

Enthroned on the azure sphere, Jupiter holds the sceptre of supreme power, which is divine Intelligence.

At the boundaries of the world, beneath the signs of the Zodiac, Saturn bears the globe of universal wisdom."

"I see," said Hermes; "the seven regions which comprise the visible and invisible world; I see the seven rays of the Word-Light, of the one God who traverses them and governs them by these rays. Still, O master, how does mankind journey through all these worlds?"

"Do you see," said Osiris, "a luminous seed fall from the regions of the Milky Way into the seventh sphere? These are germs of souls. They live like faint vapours in the region of Saturn, gay and free from care, knowing not their own happiness. On falling from sphere to sphere, however, they put on increasingly heavier envelopes. In each incarnation they acquire a new corporeal sense, in harmony with the surroundings in which they are living. Their vital energy increases, but in proportion as they enter into denser bodies they lose the memory of their celestial origin. Thus is effected the fall of souls which come from the divine Ether. Ever more and more captivated by matter and intoxicated by life, they fling themselves like a rain of fire, with quiverings of voluptuous delight, through the regions of Grief, Love, and Death, right into their earthly prison where you yourself lament, held down by the fiery centre of the earth, and where divine life for you presents nothing more than an empty dream."

“Can souls die?” asked Hermes.

“Yes, for many perish in the fatal descent.” replied the voice of Osiris, “The soul is the daughter of heaven, and its journey is a test. If it loses the memory of its origin, in its unbridled love of matter, the divine spark which was in it and which might have become more brilliant than a star, returns to the ethereal region, a lifeless atom, and the soul disaggregates in the vortex of gross elements.”

Hermes shuddered at these words, for a raging tempest enveloped him in a black mist. The seven spheres disappeared beneath dense vapours. In them he saw human spectres, uttering strange cries, carried off and torn by phantoms of monsters and animals, amidst nameless groans and blasphemies.

“Such is the destiny of souls irremediably base and evil.” proclaimed Osiris. “Their torture finishes only with their destruction, losing all consciousness. The vapours are now dispersing and the seven spheres reappear beneath the firmament. Look on this side. Do you see this swarm of souls trying to mount once more to the lunar regions? Some are beaten back to earth like eddies of birds beneath the might of the tempest. The rest with mighty wings reach the upper sphere, which draws them with it as it rotates. Once they have come to this sphere, they recover their vision of divine things. This time, however, they are not content to reflect them in the dream of a powerless happiness; they become impregnated thereby with the lucidity of a grief-enlightened consciousness, the energy of a will acquired through struggle and strife. They become luminous, for they possess the divine in themselves and radiate it in their acts.

Strengthen therefore your soul, O Hermes! Calm your dark mind by contemplating these distant flights of souls which mount the seven spheres and are scattered about therein like sheaves of sparks. You can also follow them, but a strong will it needs to rise. Look how they swarm and assemble into divine choruses. Each

places itself beneath its favourite Genius; the most beautiful dwell in the solar region; the most powerful rise to Saturn. Some ascend to the Father, powers themselves amidst the powers. For where everything ends, everything eternally begins; and the seven spheres say together: Wisdom! Love! Justice! Beauty! Splendour! Knowledge! Immortality!"^{<44>}

As stated earlier, this text can be viewed as an archetypal, cosmogonic vision of Life, in fact a rather curious exposition of the phases and conditions that have shaped life in the universe. If this is put side by side with the creation myth of Genesis in the Old Testament, some very interesting points of correspondence can be found, but also a clear deviation. This creation story is more in concordance with the short utterance at the beginning of the Gospel of John in the New Testament:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in darkness; and the darkness did not comprehend it."

This brings us back to the beginning of the beginnings, a world *in statu nascendi*, a Word like a Great Light conquering darkness. It represents a gnostic doctrine more prevalent in the East, which later was absorbed in Blavatsky's theosophical movement. It was not unlike the words preached by Jesus, as written further ahead in the Gospel of John:

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

The brotherhood of our monastery have preached that Jesus had travelled East in his youth. In India they also recognise a historical figure with the name *Jeshua*, who lived and studied there. In fact, he went even further East, and studied under the

Buddhists and Taoists sharing their bowls of rice and their ancient wisdom, including the art of spiritual healing. The concept of a complementary part of reality representing an inextinguishable inner force of nature, pictured as a light, a divine intelligence containing all things in potentiality, enclosing the models of all beings, i.e. the realm of the spirit, is the fundamental Hermetic Doctrine of Eastern cultures.

Chinese Hermeticism

To start out with the most distant philosophies, in both geographic and psychological sense, I turn now to one of the primary Hermetic treatises of the East: the *I Ching*.

The I Ching is a collection of writings that has formed over a period of 3000 years in China. Many great philosophers have worked on it, including the great mind of *Confucius*. The I Ching has not the same appeal in Europe as it has in the Eastern countries. Much of its symbolism is not readily understood by the Western mind, and the use of the I Ching as a *Book of Oracles*, using the element of chance in obtaining the 'judgements', is frowned upon by many of its philosophers. So, the significance of its contents and its methods are generally put at the same level as that of fortune telling or witchcraft, as with the Tarot. However, both the Tarot and the I Ching are ancient Hermetic Systems of philosophy, and should really be wider studied in the West by the more exact scientific community. But as it now stands, the I Ching will always have a larger significance in China than in the West due to its roots in Taoism and Confucianism.

The I Ching is popularly called the '*Book of Changes*', and it truly has many faces. Although it may be used for prophesy, it doesn't do more than providing simple advice of what to do in a particular situation. It is foremost the '*Nobleman*' that features in the book, whom the I Ching, when asked, serves with his advice. The judgement is gained by a ritual of dividing stalks -

or throwing coins. The Nobleman moves among the populace in much the same way as Jesus of Nazareth did. He walks in the middle and understands the tendencies and the spirit of the time. He carries his internal light, but he also knows his own limits and, if needed, obscures this inner light and seeks appropriate company. The I Ching is not deeply involved in religion, but refers to the divine in very general terms as the *The Creative* as opposed to the *The Receiving*, both moreover to be seen as principles. This is clearly the Hermetic element in the Book of Changes: that it consists of 64 signs (the hexagrams), which all include opposites. Moreover, the I Ching is mainly concerned with finding harmony between opposites. The I Ching, when used as a book of wisdom, contains many interesting aspects that may keep the more exact minds at work. The Swiss psychiatrist Carl G. Jung was quite charmed when he was asked by Richard Wilhelm to write an introduction to his translation of the I Ching^{<45>} and it seems he became dedicated to its use. Jung introduced in connection with the I Ching the concept of 'synchronicity' at a time when the scientists were just getting confused over the phenomenon of Quantum Entanglement. Jung posed that synchronicity is of great interest to the Eastern mind, as opposed to the concept of causality that is firmly rooted in the Western countries. As causality seeks to explain the relation between events as they evolve in time, Jung proposed that synchronicity refers rather to the relation between events taking place at the same time, but spatially at different locations. So, it would relate to the question whether events would be connected in the same way Bohm had proposed as discussed earlier. In the context of the operation of the Book of Changes, the issue seems to be more about the question whether our thoughts in some way influence the outcome of the coins we throw (or yarrow stalks we divide) to obtain our 'judgement'. Although we feel there is some

influence, we fail to believe that the influence is *meaningful*.

As far as the history of the I Ching is concerned, some attention must be given to how its structure might have grown from a very simple concept to its present diversified form. The I Ching came into being with the mythological figure of Fu Si, who was, according to the myth, the first man able to comprehend the nature of events between heaven and earth. He designed the 8 *trigrams*. Successive contributions from King Wen (about 1150 BC) and his son, the Duke of Chow, gave the I Ching the form it has today: that of 64 *hexagrams*, built up each from two trigrams. The Duke also provided short judgements to each of these signs during the time he was imprisoned by the tyrant Chow-Sin. He also provided the texts to the separate lines of each hexagram; a task that must have been inspired by great genius, because these separate lines enable the ‘changes’ (conversion of one hexagram to another) which are the main physiology of the book. In principle there are 64×64 possible oracles (4096), and the texts to the separate lines thus had to be well designed. (The Great Work by the Duke of Chow was likely accomplished by the abundance of time available to him in prison, as seen in so many cases in history!)

The signs of the I Ching are simple line figures in which broken or full lines are resting on top of each other. The two basic line elements are ——, which stands for Jin, the weak line element, and —, which stands for Jang, the strong line element. The constant conversion of Jin into Jang and Jang into Jin is depicted in the well-known figure of Jin and Jang:



Likely the two line figures originated from the most simple cleromantic process to give merely a ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ answer by

tossing a coin. (We are advised well to do this for resolving cumbersome problems where impartiality is needed!) Later the need for differentiation must have given rise to doubling and again doubling to 8 trigrams. However, after the augmentation to 64 hexagrams, the system of transformations of one hexagram to another was particularly inspired. In fact, it raises the book a level higher to that of a Hermetic system of transformations, much like that ones we see in Quantum States and there evolution through transformation matrices. To this, Leibnitz who had contact with the Jesuits in China, and who wrote the first European commentary on the I Ching, put forward an interesting theistic argument: the hexagrams proved the universality of binary numbers and the existence of God, because the transformations from the broken Jin line to the solid Jang line cannot occur without the ‘intervention of God’. Although this was criticized by Hegel, the main idea of God ‘manipulating’ quantum states is worthwhile to explore in a later section.

There is more to the system of hexagrams than the eye meets. When we start with the basic trigrams, we first observe that they contain three of the four alchemical elements (Earth, Water and Fire) and five other elements Heaven, Thunder, Mountain, Wind and Lake. In a more elementary level, which I wish to introduce it this point, the trigrams could be associated with the aspects of Matter, Energy and Information. The element of Earth, ‘the Receiving’, lacks all aspects (all Jin lines), while the element of Heaven, ‘the Creating’, contains all aspects (all Jang lines), with the other six lacking in either one or two of the aspects. Although it is not possible to consistently assign each aspect (M, E and I) to a separate line in the trigram, a system can be devised that reflects the three-tiered system of the ‘mental universe’ in a way typical for the Chinese system, which differs somewhat from the Western system. The trigrams

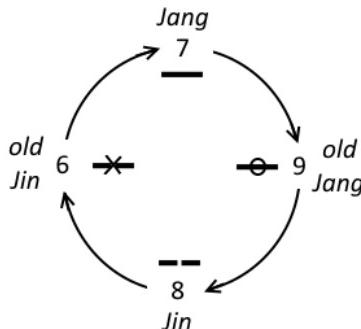
(elements) and their associated properties are but summarily listed in the following scheme:

SCHEME I - THE TRIGRAMS

Element	Aspects	Name	Property	Colour
☰	+M +E +I	the Creating	Strong	White
☷	-M -E -I	the Receiving	Devoted	Black
☳	+M +E -I	the Exciting	Movement	Purple
☵	+M -E +I	the Unfathomable	Danger	Green
☶	+M -E -I	the Standstill	Rest	Blue
☴	-M -E +I	the Gentle	Penetrating	Yellow
☲	-M +E -I	the Attaching	Light	Red
☱	-M +E +I	the Joyful	Merriness	Orange

Equally important is the interconversion/transformation process between Jin and Jang, which is expressed in the signs for the 'old Jang' (⊖) and the 'old Jin' (⊗):

SCHEME II - THE INTERCONVERSION



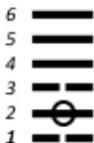
The process of consultation (in its simpler form) then goes as follows: three coins are thrown and the first line of the hexagram is selected from four possible outcomes (Scheme III).

The next lines are then produced rather in the same fashion and stacked from bottom up till the hexagram is complete. (As one can notice, the 4096 possible outcomes are not equal in probability, there being less chance for an *old Jang* or *old Jin* to occur than a *Jin* or *Jang*.)

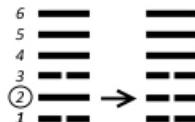
SCHEME III THE COIN METHOD

	Outcome	Value	Line	Chance
“c”=tails	c c c	6	✗	1:8
“h”=head	c c h	7	—	3:8
	c h h	8	--	3:8
	h h h	9	○	1:8

So, if the total outcome is, for instance:



This would then mean that we have a change from one hexagram to another, by the circumstance that the 2nd line is an old Jang (a ‘9 on the 2nd place’), changing Jang into Jin:



The oracle now consists of reading from the text the “Image” (starting condition) of the hexagram, then the particular meaning of the old Jang on position 2, and finally reading the verdict associated with the transformed hexagram. If in this particular case I would have asked how the I Ching views the significance of this thesis, as I did, the first hexagram, number 6

in the canonical text, clearly hints at a struggle or conflict:

*"Heaven and water proceed in opposite ways:
The image of Conflict.
Thus in all his transactions the Nobleman
Carefully considers the beginning."*

The hexagram indicates that the opposing tendencies of the two trigrams cause an unavoidable inner conflict. To avoid conflict all steps of an undertaking must be carefully taken into consideration at the very beginning. If rights and duties are exactly defined, as in a group where the spiritual trends of the individuals harmonize, the cause of conflict is removed in advance. So, the I Ching hints here in the context of the question that the undertaking of the present pupil will lead to conflict if not properly planned and guided by his peers. The specific direction for an old Jang on the 2nd line reads:

*"Nine on the second place means:
One cannot engage in conflict;
One returns home and retreats.
The people of his town, three hundred households,
Remain free of guilt."*

The translation of Wilhelm states as an explanation:

"In a struggle with an enemy of superior strength, retreat is no disgrace. Timely withdrawal prevents bad consequences. If, out of a false sense of honour, a man allowed himself to be tempted into an unequal conflict, he would be drawing down disaster upon himself. In such a case a wise and conciliatory attitude benefits the whole community, which will then not be drawn into the conflict."

The significance of this truth is well appreciated by the predicament of the present student.

The outcome (judgement) is given in hexagram 12, P'i / the Standstill:

“STANDSTILL:

*Evil people do not further
The perseverance of the superior man.
The great departs; the small approaches.*

The explanation is:

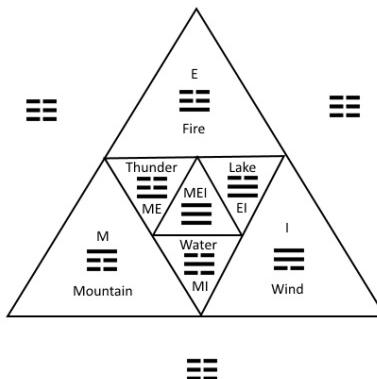
Heaven and earth are out of unity and all things are stagnated. What is above has no relation to what is below, and on earth confusion and disorder prevail. The dark power is within, the light power is outside. Weakness is within, harshness outside. Within are the inferior, and outside are the superior. The way of inferior people is in ascent; the way of superior people is on the decline. But superior people do not allow themselves to be turned from their principles. If the possibility of exerting influence is closed to them, they nevertheless remain faithful to their principles and withdraw into seclusion.

This judgement portrays very well the dilemma of our brotherhood in times of decline and the isolation of the apprentice in his effort to produce this thesis. As the message is clear, there is a more important observation: the change from one hexagram to another is entirely logical. This highlights the degree of perfection and completeness of the hexagram system, which has been in use for centuries and explains much of the classical Chinese ‘reservedness’ in the socio-political sphere, with emphasis on long-term deliberation.

Returning to the discussion about the cosmogonic dimensions of the I Ching, it is possible to recognise the formation of the Universe from the basic elements Earth/Mountain (☶), Fire (☲) and Wind (☴), where the latter stands for pure information, an element that goes largely unnoticed. The signs can be combined in a diagram to some degree of consistency by taking the opposites of the trigrams in opposite corners (Scheme IV). Combination of Wind with Mountain gives Water/the Unfathomable (☵), where information lies in a latent form. The combination of Mountain with Fire yields Thunder (☳). This depicts in a sense the wild

forces of nature, in their unrestrained, unclean form. The combination of Wind and Fire yields Lake (☰), the joyful inspirational force, a picture of the Holy Spirit. Thunder, Lake and Water then combine in the Creative (☰). The hexagram ‘the Receiving’ then falls out of the diagram, but represents the Pleroma, with its ability to receive any form and aspect. This may be associated with the *Ether* or the *zero point energy*, but does not represent empty space or *the void*. There is something that is able to receive forms, quite apart from the real void.

SCHEME IV THE TRIGRAMS IN THEIR ASPECT DIAGRAM



This system also depicts the moods and temperaments of the primitive man, who became aware of these aspects gradually and it developed further into the self-consciousness of modern man. In this way we can explain a lot of things of how we feel about the world and our fellow men. When the trigrams are doubled into the hexagrams the lower trigram reflects our *direct* consciousness (the exact mind), and the upper trigram our *subconsciousness*. Thus, KOE, ‘working on what is spoiled’ is a picture of wind blowing at the bottom of the mountain, or consciousness that a resting situation should be subtly changed.

It is not durable, as the Sophist's decree would put it. The inverted sign, TJIËN, stands for general development: the knowledge that all change must come gradually; in KOE the background force is the permanency of the situation, and the wind is in the foreground, seeking to change that situation. In TJIËN the background is the mild change and the permanent status seeks to retain that change.



KOE: Work on what has been spoiled (Decay)



Tjiën: Development (Gradual Progress)

In this system each sign can be converted into any other sign and these changes have their own significance. Certain summations of signs can be carried out, each with their own meaning. (As a small digression: one may associate each hexagram with a field on the chessboard, and when playing a game of chess, each move will portray a set of changes, which can be read and used to direct the game.)

The main object here is to show that the I Ching is a system that considers three forces in nature to be primary, which could correspond to Matter, Energy and Information. The Energy is moreover put in the context of the Mind, and the Information in context of the Spirit. The latter is pictured in the Chinese treatise as gentle and penetrating, and together with the mind as joyful, enthusiastic. Together with matter, the spiritual element is merely condensed into a fathomless state,

represented by a lake: a hidden sty of forms that rests secretly in the depths of the pleroma.

The Tarot System

Another Hermetic system to which we turn, albeit in a short space, is the Tarot. It is known mainly as a pack of cards of fairly obscure history. One refers generally to the *Major Arcana* cards, 22 in number ($3 \times 7 + 1$). They comprise:

TABLE I - THE MAJOR ARCANA OF THE TAROT

I. <i>The Magician</i>	VIII. <i>Strength</i>	XV. <i>The Devil</i>
II. <i>The High Priestess</i>	IX. <i>The Hermit</i>	XVI. <i>The Tower</i>
III. <i>The Empress</i>	X. <i>Wheel of Fortune</i>	XVII. <i>The Star</i>
IV. <i>The Emperor</i>	XI. <i>Justice</i>	XVIII. <i>The Moon</i>
V. <i>The Hierophant</i>	XII. <i>The Hanged Man</i>	XIX. <i>The Sun</i>
VI. <i>The Lovers</i>	XIII. <i>Death</i>	XX. <i>Judgement</i>
VII. <i>The Chariot</i>	XIV. <i>Temperance</i>	XXI. <i>The World</i>

(*The Fool* is an unnumbered card, sometimes placed at the beginning as '0', or at the end as 'XXII'.)

These cards all represent archetypes, not only because they feature frequently in dreams, but also because they form the basis of much we know about mind processes in general. The cards can be also divided in three groups: *Sun* cards, *water* cards and *earth* cards, yet again representing the three-tiered structure of the conscious universe, and each card can be placed in one realm of it. The Cards of the major arcana supplement these, where images are varied in a very subtle way.

Jung's archetypes

This brings us next to the concept of the *archetype*, which was advanced in the psychological sphere by Carl Jung around 1919 which he presented as a symbolical equivalent of a "primordial image". He was in his formulation influenced by Plato. In the

next sections a system is proposed where Jung's concept of archetypes as innate, universal prototypes of Platonist forms and ideas are put into a hermetic system, in the way of an arithmetic equivalent of the I Ching (not yet quite being mathematics). It is not common knowledge that Jung wrote an audacious mystical manuscript, first in black notebooks, but later copied out in neat calligraphy - on vellum as a latter-day monk - that carried the title "*Liber Novus*". Some have baptised it the "Red Book", with connotations of it being "forbidden". Still, his treatise is full of intricate images and stories that can help us also with further deciphering the *Magnum Opus* of Democritus, which held equally mystifying images, and his last scroll will be covered later in this chapter.

The Red Book is in essence an expansion of the *Seven Sermons to the Dead*. It features predominantly Philemon, the person that Jung seeks out after seeing him in a vision, and who he finds as a retired magician. The narrative also features the anchorite Ammonius, Elijah's daughter Salome (the anima figure), the Red One (with whom he discourses), Satan, Izdubar and his axe and many other. Jung had framed the archetype in his mind as an instrument to interpret psychological observations, e.g. during hypnosis or in dreams. He treated them as psychological organs, analogous to physical ones, there being isomorphism between them. He writes^{<46>}:

My views about the 'archaic remnants', which I call 'archetypes' or 'primordial images,' have been constantly criticized by people who lack a sufficient knowledge of the psychology of dreams and of mythology. The term 'archetype' is often misunderstood as meaning certain definite mythological images or motifs, but these are nothing more than conscious representations. Such variable representations cannot be inherited. The archetype is a tendency to form such representations of a motif - representations that can vary a great deal in detail without losing their basic pattern.'

Many varieties of archetypes have been in consideration after Jung, but his structure has remained the basis for the newer insights. The four major archetypes, the '*primordial images*', are: the *self*, the *anima/animus*, the *shadow*, and the *persona*, along with the *Hero*, the *Explorer*, The *Creator*, the *Jester/Magician* etc. In the sphere of Gnosticism these are seen as images that are '*imprinted*' in the Pleroma.

The Cosmogony of Democritus

After having encircled the hot pot of our main course, we now return to Democritus' writings to return to the central subject matter of this thesis. Besides a description of the *Universal Substance* in his last scroll, as cited earlier, Democritus summarises his theories of cosmogonies and re-introduces Abraxyne, representing him/her in a more worked out image of the *Sacred Serpent* that envelops the Universe. All the wisdom Democritus obtains from Abraxyne he codes in his last scroll. He relates that Abraxyne had initially been the consort of Mnemosyne, assisting her in mediating and interpreting the Divine Spirit. Democritus was told by Abraxyne that he was separated from Mnemosyne after her violent death at the hands of Gilgamesh and Enkidu, and had been hereafter in custody of the first Jewish community, where he had conveyed the basic teachings of the *Tree of Life* in a body of work that later became the Kabbalah. Later Abraxyne had been passed on to the Greek philosophers, first to Heraclitus, then to Parmenides and Hippocrates. When he had come to Democritus, Abraxyne finally finds a disciple open for his teachings. Before this, Abraxyne conveys to Democritus his history: according to the myth, Mnemosyne was residing in the famous primordial cedar forest of the Lebanon - a place now situated in Syria. Mnemosyne and Abraxyne had come down from a previous Aeon and they served as the *Illuminators of Man*. Further Democritus describes Abraxyne in his known role of the

guardian of the Tree of Life. His description of Mnemosyne's main task to edify mankind takes most of the space in this last scroll. She created the first civilisations, starting with the training of the nine Muses, who were all ancient humanoids. They migrated from the Lebanon in all directions, East to India and China, south to Mesopotamia, northwest to Anatolia, further to Greece, Thrace and Crete, and southwest into Africa. Soon in the world nine discrete civilisations were established. Each had received the same primary knowledge, but they had different temperaments and character, and moved to different parts of the world, such that differences between the primary ancient cultures arose during their long separation. The main subject is the process of divine sublimation, the process being allegorised by the figure of Mnemosyne instructing her children. Democritus finally transforms much of his knowledge into a new understanding and meaning of the universe.

When he is approaching the end of his life, his lifelong quest finally bears fruit: by combining Abraxyne's instructions with the old Logos concept, and adding some arithmetic and alchemistic procedures to it, he puts together a cosmogonic scheme from illustrations he observed at the residence of Hermes III, and combines them with Taoist symbols he encountered in China. The names of Lao Tze and Kun Fu Tze are explicitly written in the figure and it adorns atomic equivalents of the trigrams together with the all-embracing Abraxyne (reproduced in Figure 7 on the next page). In his later days Democritus understands that the timeless artificers of creation and destruction (the syzygy of Mnemosyne and Abraxyne) had been broken, but after his visit to Delphi the unity had been restored by the Pythia who trapped Python around the ancient Seeds of Eden, making the rebirth possible in the next cycle of the Aeon. Democritus expresses his hope that the syzygy will remain undisturbed near the Omphalos, but

he fears that Mankind, in its hunger for knowledge, may find the sepulchre and disrupt the holy pair. Democritus' tempting cosmogonic scheme combines a number of elements from the atomists, the Kabalah, and the trigrams of the Chinese realm. Clearly visible is the process of formation of elementary forms, entities arising first in pairs of opposites, which group themselves in three realms.

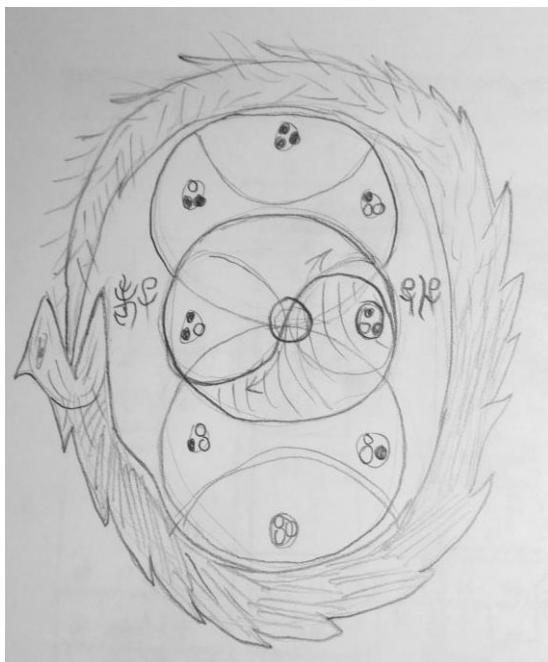


Figure 7. Reproduced from Democritus, Scroll VII.

These ideas are concurrent with modern Theosophical and scientific theories about the three-tiered structure of the material/mental universe. Democritus pairs the image of his cosmogony with a well-known poem of the Taoist realm, in which the inner world of man is represented as the harmonious embrace of an abundant collection of concepts and ideas, which

are like the modern archetypes, and for which we can find a neat mirror image in the makeup of the universe, composed of complementary functioning structures (interacting molecules and life forms):

*The Tao existed before its name,
and from its name, the opposites evolved,
giving rise to three divisions,
and then to names abundant.
These things embrace receptively,
achieving inner harmony,
and by their unity create
the inner world of man.'*

The intuitive illustration of Democritus thus refers to an underlying principle, which we could call the *plenum of the universe*, in which information entities arise in pairs of opposites, which group themselves in three realms, and these then form an abundance of other separated entities, but these remain embraced receptively (entangled). Since we talk of entities which have the aspects of *realms* (dimensions), *information* (names) and *tangible form* (particles, waves, strings...), we could refer to them as *Holons*, somewhat in the style of David Bohm's formulation of the holo-movement. Thus, all structures encountered in living systems are still an unbroken whole, despite of their seeming separateness. It is evidenced by the stunning efficiency by which all the intricate interactions between parts play out to give the *homeostasis of life*. The idea of '*unity in diversity*' means there is *inner harmony*, the unity is '*harmonious*'. When observing nature, during the scientific process of '*taking it all apart*' we realise that it is of stunning beauty and efficiency. That resonates strongly with the Biblical words: '*...and God saw that it was good*'. One might argue that the evidence of ancient dinosaurs and the predatory nature of many animals (including ourselves) argue against this.

However, one of the most important facts we realise in this cosmogonic image is that despite some of the frightening aspects of nature the main experience is still that of wonder and awe, that intrinsically all living creatures form a harmonious co-existence and are in most aspects beautiful to a degree of perfection that cannot be called anything else than *magnificent*. This realisation may be called subjective, but the beauty of '*All Creatures Great and Small*' remains a fact despite of it. If we would not have this intuition, we would not be scientists or philosophers, maybe not even cognitive creatures expressing themselves in language.

With the writings of Democritus we have proceeded to at least one central point in our effort to '*proper understanding of ancient writings*', as decreed by the Theosophists: subjective intuitions can be seen as a complementary reality that shapes understanding and meaning, because that is what we are after in our mental quest. That it means strife, yes, but our living environment invokes awe, a deep feeling of meaning. A tree, a mountain, a lake, a wasp, a spider, a lizard, an ant (read Salomon!); in their perplexing complexity they all have intrinsic and extrinsic meaning and value. If spiders and wasps disappear, we should be gravely worried: it means we will vanish. You don't need to be a biologist to understand the concept of the holistic unity of Nature. In his closing words, Democritus presents a warning to future generations of philosophers:

'Are we not already too far in our knowledge, such that we cannot keep up with the understanding and meaning of it? Is it not like a duckling, just having learned to swim, diving down the precipice? Alas we, philosophers, must let Nature have its go, once our History has been put it in motion. It must gain momentum, but it may not shatter the Holy Pair! Nature will see to preserving this condition.'

The “New Age” movement

After Blavatsky and Swedenborg, Theosophy awkwardly dispersed in a variety of directions. Yet, the so-called *New Age* movement, which was partly rooted in their philosophies and in those of Carl Jung, has progressed in a definitively unwholesome direction in our times. A first contender was Rudolf Steiner, who argued against many aspects of Blavatsky's doctrines and coined his own Anthroposophical society, which he rooted more in Western than in Eastern philosophy. Steiner was mostly indebted to Goethe, the logical result of his role as editor of Goethe's work in Weimar. He quotes Goethe at the beginning of his book on Theosophy, as '*the starting point of one of the ways by which the constitution of man can be known*':

"When a person first becomes aware of the objects surrounding him, he observes them in relation to himself, and rightly so, for his whole fate depends on whether they please or displease him, attract or repel, help or harm him. This quite natural way of looking at and judging things appears to be as easy as it is necessary. Nevertheless, a person is exposed through it to a thousand errors which often cause him shame and embitter his life. A far more difficult task do those undertake whose keen desire for knowledge urges them to strive to observe the objects of nature in themselves and in their relations to each other, for they soon miss the gauge which helped them when they, as persons, regard the objects in reference to themselves personally. They lack the gauge of pleasure and displeasure, attraction and repulsion, usefulness and harmfulness; this gauge they have to renounce entirely. They should, as dispassionate and, so to speak, divine beings, seek and examine what is, and not what gratifies. Thus the true botanist should not be affected either by the beauty or by the usefulness of the plants. He has to study their structure and their relation to the rest of the vegetable kingdom; and just as they are one and all enticed forth and shone upon by the sun, so he should with an equitable, quiet glance look at and survey them all and obtain the gauge for this knowledge, the data for his deductions, not out of himself, but from within the circle of things which he observes."^{<47>}

Although Rudolf Steiner recognised the essential truth of an indivisible unity of the cosmos, he also realised there was a division into the '*perceptible appearance by the senses*' and the '*formal nature of the world of thought*'. He believed that the faculties of thought could be sufficiently deepened to find realities about things that the senses could never reveal. To him the human experience was the emergent result of the structure of human consciousness, which separates perception from thinking. In line with our earlier discourse, Steiner clearly saw these two faculties of the mind to give us two complementary views of the world, both being necessary to arrive at a more complete comprehension of it. Thus, in '*thinking about perception*' and in '*perceiving the process of thinking*' he found a hidden inner unity between two poles of our experience:

"Truth is paradoxically both an objective discovery and yet a free creation of the human spirit, that never would exist at all if we did not generate it ourselves. The task of understanding is not to replicate in conceptual form something that already exists, but rather to create a wholly new realm, that together with the world given to our senses constitutes the fullness of reality."^{<48>}

In his *Philosophy of Freedom*, Steiner further explores this idea:

"Free deeds are those for which we are fully conscious of the motive for our action; freedom is the spiritual activity of penetrating with consciousness our own nature and that of the world, and the real activity of acting in full consciousness..."

"To be free is to be capable of thinking one's own thoughts – not the thoughts merely of the body, or of society, but thoughts generated by one's deepest, most original, most essential and spiritual self, one's individuality."^{<49>}

This idea to liberate our will to find our '*true self*' coincides closely with the Jungian individuation process treated earlier. To Steiner, Man, as the sole exponent of self-consciousness,

seeks to *transcend* Nature, and so he aligns himself to a large extent with Nietzsche. However, this transcendence can easily turn into a dangerous form of complacency and disconnectedness, as we observe presently in the Western hemisphere, especially in the New Age movement. In an early stage, it allowed for a process of blending of theosophical ideas with political activism - the *counter-culture movement* in the 1960's - but then there was the emergence of a plurality of spin-off movements and publications of quite disputable nature. It largely resulted in a dissolution process that is now in full swing.

The Gnostic Scriptures

Closely related to this subject, we should appraise the new turn Gnosticism has taken in the last few years. Also here the forces of corruption are at work, by representing ancient scriptures in a scientific cloak, some of which are upon closer inspection incorrect. This is particularly true for the recent rediscovery of the *Nag Hamadi* collection of ancient scriptures that were in part already known, particularly to Carl Jung. As stated earlier, the Gnostic tradition is very old, and its foundation lies in the teachings of Mnemosyne, likely related to the cult of Cybele and the early Sibyls, but whose scriptures were lost and then redressed, repaired and misinterpreted. The Sibylline Oracles comprise an example of ancient scriptures in which Gnostic and early Christian legends are mixed up with Hellenistic, Jewish and Roman mythology in an attempt to reconstruct past prophesies. Yet, sometimes we are made aware of the existence of genuine fragments of ancient Gnostic writings that found their way somehow into our times. One conspicuous example is the *Kybalion*. The manuscript was attributed to William Atkinson (an alleged occultist and an early exponent of the *New Thought* movement), but the marked similarity with some very short citations we find in Democritus' extant writings of the

General Sermon of the *Corpus Hermeticum* leaves us wondering about Atkinson's source. As the retrieval and translation of the missing scrolls of Democritus is presently the most important task of our brotherhood, there might be a connection for further investigation. In absence of the final text of the Hermetic *General Sermon*, we use the basis we presently find in the subject matter through the Christian Gnostic writings.

In his *Adversus Haereses* Irenaeus refers to a secret book written by the apostle John as part of "*an indescribable number of secret and illegitimate writings, which they themselves have forged, to bewilder the minds of foolish people, who are ignorant of the true scriptures.*" He refers, among others, to the *Apocryphon of John*, also known today as the *Secret Book of John*. Presently, there are four extant copies: two in short and two in long format, as parts of the *Berlin Codex* and the more elaborate *Nag Hamadi* codex. We will treat this text later in more depth, but quote here the most salient parts for the purpose of further glueing together our subject matter and crossing our bridge.

According to the Gnostic doctrines of the post-Christian era, Jesus taught his disciples, including Maria Magdalene and Martha, details of the mysteries of creation, although only on the level of the *lower mysteries*. These teachings would logically cover the same subject as in the General Sermon that Hermes III taught in Hermopolis. In Christ these teachings were supplemented with the Sophia myth, which relates to the fall and redemption of the virgin deity *Pistis Sophia* through the twelve material Aeons and her restoration into the 13th Aeon. In the Secret Book of John, however, the creation myth takes a highly multifarious form of evolution of principle powers into more and more dispersed powers, which shines some light on the process of creation as it was thought by the ancient Greeks.

The rise of the Messiah was no chance event: Jesus of Nazareth was born at an auspicious moment in history when there was intense spiritual unrest among the Roman-occupied Jewish population of Palestine. All were expecting a transformative event through a *Teacher of Righteousness*, as prophesized in the Jewish apocalyptic scriptures. (Such times of unrest we are presently living again.) This is well pictured in the opening of the *Secret Book of John*:

"And it happened one day, when John, the brother of James - who are the sons of Zebedee - had come up to the temple, that a Pharisee named Arimanius approached him and said to him, 'Where is your master whom you followed?' And he said to him, 'He has gone to the place from which he came.' The Pharisee said to him, 'With deception did this Nazarene deceive you all, and he filled your ears with lies, and closed your hearts and turned you away from the traditions of your fathers.'

When I, John, heard these things I turned away from the temple to a deserted place. And I grieved greatly in my heart, saying, 'How then was the saviour appointed, and why was he sent into the world by his Father, and who is his Father who sent him, and of what sort is that aeon to which we shall go? For what did he mean when he said to us, "This aeon to which you will go is of the type of the imperishable aeon", but he did not teach us concerning the latter, of what sort it is.' <50>

The tone of this introduction is familiar: we have been shown a truth, but our limited memory and the conventions of the time have veiled it, and in the sudden absence of the recollection of evidence of this truth we are in despair. We want to re-ascertain the truth, but have forgotten the details of the path to it, and are left among worldly traditionalists who reprimand us for our dissenting views. The next paragraph is reminiscent of the Hermetic scriptures: John passes into a new sphere of vision, as with Hermes who faces Osiris, and he is guided through a series of visions.

"Straightaway, while I was contemplating this question, behold, the heavens opened and the whole creation which is below heaven shone, and the world was shaken. I was afraid, and behold I saw in the light a youth who stood by me. While I looked at him, he became like an old man. And he changed his likeness again, becoming like a servant. There was not a plurality before me, but there was a likeness with multiple forms in the light, and the likenesses appeared through each other, and the likeness had three forms."

The text of the *Secret Book of John* then proceeds to a presentation of the various stages of spiritual evolution.

"He said to me, John, John, why do you doubt, or why are you afraid? You are not unfamiliar with this image, are you? - that is, do not be timid! - I am the one who is with you (pl.) always. I am the Father, I am the Mother, I am the Son. I am the undefiled and incorruptible one. Now I have come to teach you what is and what was and what will come to pass, that you may know the things which are not revealed and those which are revealed, and to teach you concerning the unwavering race of the perfect Man. Now, therefore, lift up your face, that you may receive the things that I shall teach you today, and may tell them to your fellow spirits who are from the unwavering race of the perfect Man.

And I asked to know it, and he said to me, "The Monad is a monarchy with nothing above it. It is he who exists as God and Father of everything, the invisible One who is above everything, who exists as incorruption, which is in the pure light into which no eye can look. ...

And his thought performed a deed and she came forth, namely she who had appeared before him in the shine of his light. This is the first power which was before all of them (and) which came forth from his mind, She is the forethought of the All - her light shines like his light - the perfect power which is the image of the invisible, virginal Spirit who is perfect. The first power, the glory of Barbelō, the perfect glory in the aeons, the glory of the revelation, she glorified the virginal Spirit and it was she who praised him, because thanks to him she had come forth."

The central deity in this epistle, without whom the creation process would never have started off, is Barbēlō, and from this point onwards all acts of creation within the divine sphere are enacted through the co-action of God and Barbēlō:

"This is the first thought, his image; she became the womb of everything, for it is she who is prior to them all, the Mother-Father, the first man, the holy Spirit, the thrice-male, the thrice-powerful, the thrice-named androgynous one, and the eternal aeon among the invisible ones, and the first to come forth."

Barbēlō is granted five principal powers:

"This is the pentad of the aeons of the Father, which is the first man, the image of the invisible Spirit; it is the forethought, which [is] Barbēlō, and the thought, and the foreknowledge, and the indestructibility, and the eternal life, and the truth. This is the androgynous pentad of the aeons, which is the decad of the aeons, which is the Father."

The next phase depicts the creation of Christ as the only begotten Son (the 'Divine Autogenes'):

"And he looked at Barbēlō with the pure light which surrounds the Invisible Spirit, and [with] His spark, and she conceived from him. He begot a spark of light with a light resembling blessedness. But it does not equal His greatness. This was an only-begotten child of the Mother-Father which had come forth; it is the only offspring, the only-begotten one of the Father, the pure Light."

At this point, the Divine Autogenes (Christ), is given a helper, the *Mind*, who continues the creation process:

"And it requested to give it a fellow worker, which is the mind, and he consented gladly. And when the invisible Spirit had consented, the mind came forth, and it attended Christ, glorifying him and Barbēlō. And all these came into being in silence.

"And the mind wanted to perform a deed through the word of the Invisible Spirit. And his will became a deed and it appeared with the mind; and the light glorified it. And the word followed the will."

In these texts clues to a reply can be found on some of the pertinent questions of the Mind-Matter controversy. The next citation from the Secret Book of John returns to the Logos concept of creation:

"For because of the word, Christ the divine Autogenes created everything. And the eternal life [and] his will and the mind and the foreknowledge attended and glorified the invisible Spirit and Barbelo, for whose sake they had come into being.

Besides the Mind, which is the constitution of Man, Christ is given 'lights' and 'powers':

"For from the light, which is the Christ, and the indestructibility, through the gift of the Spirit the four lights appeared from the divine Autogenes. He expected that they might attend him. And the three are: Will, Thought, and Life. And the four powers are Understanding, Grace, Perception, and Prudence. And grace belongs to the light-aeon Armozel, which is the first angel. And there are three other aeons with this aeon: grace, truth, and form. And the second light is Oriel, who has been placed over the second aeon. And there are three other aeons with him: conception, perception, and memory. And the third light is Daveithai, who has been placed over the third aeon. And there are three other aeons with him: understanding, love, and idea. And the fourth aeon was placed over the fourth light Eleleth. And there are three other aeons with him: perfection, peace, and wisdom. These are the four lights which attend the divine Autogenes, and these are the twelve aeons which attend the son of the mighty one, the Autogenes, the Christ, through the will and the gift of the invisible Spirit. And the twelve aeons belong to the son of the Autogenes. And all things were established by the Will of the Holy Spirit through the Autogenes.

These form the subject material we hope to further digest in our next chapter.

6. Theosophy, String Theory and Reality

Emanationism



ROM the preceding chapters we now arrive at the digestion of our sundry subjects. It is a long gone delusion that mathematics can give us insight into the whole of reality, as even Bertrand Russell was forced to admit after his sincere attempts to raise mathematics to an absolute level. As a formal system, the mere use of formalism does not explain the complex issues of our observed reality, especially the complexities of mind and matter. Why we use the axioms and logical rules as we do, or why do mathematical statements (e.g., the laws of arithmetic) appear to be true, as Hermann Weyl deliberated:

"What truth or objectivity can be ascribed to this theoretic construction of the world, which presses far beyond the given, is a profound philosophical problem. It is closely connected with the further question: what impels us to take as a basis precisely the particular axiom system developed by Hilbert? Consistency is indeed a necessary but not a sufficient condition. For the time being we probably cannot answer this question... I see in this a decisive defeat of the philosophical attitude of pure phenomenology, which thus proves to be insufficient for the understanding of creative science even in the area of cognition that is most primal and most readily open to evidence – mathematics"^{51>}.

Formal logical systems always run the risk of incompleteness and inconsistency. As to the latter, Gödel's incompleteness theorem proved that logical systems of arithmetic cannot contain a valid proof of their own consistency. When dealing with reality, consistency is only one aspect, the second aspect is the role of the observer. Whatever one may postulate about reality, nothing can be said about it unless there is an observer.

One of the major theoretical issues, the badly understood concept of *infinity*, we may consider later in relation to the concept of the *Æon*. A mathematical concept of infinity will not help us at all in understanding the fate of the universe. Whether the universe is finite or infinite we will never be able to know. If we add to this the newer concept of non-Euclidian space-time, we really end up in marshlands, desperately trying to keep our heads above the muddy water. However, the position of the Theosophists urges us to consider the concept of the æons in a new light ('we may find our profit in comparing this boasted modern science with ancient ignorance'). Originally, the æons comprise those undefined stretches of space-time posed between the periods where there is conscious life. Nobody can ever make statements about the nature of the æons, both in time and space, because they go unobserved. Maybe that's why physicists avoid infinities like the plague. We know, however, that space-time is *practically* infinite, and as such capable of producing highly ordered systems (including life as a special case) with a high degree of probability. Thus, it is quite vain to attempt to infer whether the order arises from chance or from a creator. The only thing that remains is a vague notion of a principle, a word, a code, or a primeval force. Not only through astronomical discoveries have we opened up some of the more intricate secrets of the universe, but we have also found that the timescale of our '*formation*' is much longer and thus much more elusive than we believed earlier. It has become clear that our existence has been due to a large succession of lucky accidents (that is: lucky for us!). Despite these findings, we can never know exactly how all these events, such as the various extinction events in the Ordovician, Devonian, Permian, Triassic and Cretaceous periods, would have actually worked out if some of them had transpired in another way or had not taken place at all. Considering the plurality of factors that have

shaped our existence, whatever exceptional or holy we may regard them to be, we can never know how general, how probable or how determined they are within the unknown scale of the æons. Logically, evolution would have proceeded differently, but nobody knows how, because we only have *this one* history, *OUR* history.

Much has been uncovered in the scientific sphere that has caused us to broaden our scope of observation and knowledge, and this all within a few hundred years of our intensive history, which yet on an evolutionary scale represents as much as nothing. This is one implication of the problem of (relative) infinity: what is the nature of very long timescale processes that take place in the universe, not only to shape life, from the constructional point of view? Life and self-consciousness are somehow entangled in a way, such that the one cannot do without the other, and thus it is logically speaking inevitable that life always exists, but it does so through transformations taking place over immeasurable stretches of time and space. Now that we are on the brink of a new extinction, likely to be caused by our own inadequacies in controlling our basic instincts and our greedy intelligence, we would really need to get the right perspective on the actual state of our existence. It raises the question: are we humans really so unique and precious, considering merely the astounding variety of life forms on our planet? We tend to boast of our civilisation, but in reality civilisations remain to clash, exposing their innate cruelty. In this context, the American biologist E. O. Wilson wrote of the '*irony of organic evolution*' that '*upon attaining self-understanding through the mind of Man, life has become the doom of its most beautiful creations*'. Another downfall of civilisation looms. Thus, we are forced to admit that our exceptionality has a jagged edge and we face the ultimate predicament of the human condition again. We run the risk of

being banished from our self-created Garden of Eden if we don't take the utmost care. The ultimate human condition was aptly pictured in our earlier quotation of Rudolf Steiner from his book on Theosophy. We might appreciate the disinterestedness of present scientific research, but today the scientific method presents its limits in a number of ways, especially when we enter the area of psychology. Firstly, we can only study phenomena we can 'reproduce' in the laboratory. Although there are exceptions, this limits research in the areas of psychology as opposed to physics. Secondly, different science disciplines breed notably different cultures and practices. In the fields of Physics and Psychology the overall practice and forms of reasoning are so different that the claim that there is a single, unique scientific method cannot be reasonably defended. At the present time it has even given rise to a 'science war' between the realists and the post-modernists. The situation is further antagonized by high-level scientists in one field of work that suddenly claim expertise in an entirely different discipline. The pundit mentality is aggravated further by the grave political and social stirrings of our time, and with the huge increase in published data, our valued scientific endeavour may soon collapse in total disarray at a time when we would need clear understanding about our condition and our impending fate².

However, when entering the realms of Quantum Theory and String Theory even the fair-minded researcher soon reaches his limits. How is he to form a useful understanding of our universe and our condition if his object of study is reduced merely to a mathematical concept? These highly abstract phenomena, such as entanglement, complementarity and indeterminism, as well as a whole range of ominous 'fields' and 'particles' besiege his

². The clergy is notorious for this abuse of knowledge. The present writer is no expert in any scientific field and rather assumes the role of bridge-builder between societal groups drifting apart. Thus, it would be unfair to call him a "pundit".

hold on reality, and they are of very little use in forming any meaningful interpretation of reality. If we propose a theory that makes use of ten or eleven dimensions, we enter a realm that might be easily probed by mathematicians, but for physicists, chemists and biologists it will not be so effortless. There is this joke about a mathematician, a physicist, a chemist and a psychologist who witnessed a traffic accident on a new traffic square which they had helped to design, and in which each denied responsibility for the accident, each accusing another member of the club for the accident, the ensuing fire and the quarrel between the hapless drivers. Was it a lack of design, the complexity of physical or chemical reality, or just our own limited comprehension? The psychologist had the final word in the matter pointing out that persistent name ‘traffic square’ could not be applied to a crossing of five roads. So, our ultimate hypocrisy is probably just that we want to control the unknowable future at all cost! Accidents will always happen, and it becomes the easy object of a pun. We constantly observe many ‘inner’ (mental) phenomena, which are linked to the ‘outer’ reality, but the connections are largely intractable.

It is truly sad to observe that our increased knowledge in the spheres of cosmology and biology has led to a sentiment of careless complacency and a new form of denialism towards the problems of decent survival of life on this planet. If the role of science is merely to gather knowledge to increase our understanding, then we may one day notice that knowledge may become an impediment to understanding, as they are a bit like the complementary pairs of variables of quantum processes (such as position and momentum). Thus, we will soon realise that the need for understanding will start to overrule our need for knowledge (data), giving rise to pseudo-science. Understanding, however, is only one intermediate step towards the perception of ‘the meaning of things’.

This unfruitful trend is evidenced in the hopeless discussions around the theory of evolution by clergymen, scientists and pundits alike. One should not deny Darwin's basic tenets of evolution, but it is a highly incomplete theory that still lacks a lot of experimental evidence. Questions about how it actually got started (how the first DNA got created), what processes govern adaptation (the nature of mutations) and what is its final purpose (which we clearly discern) are still largely unanswered. The development of Life as a phenomenon goes far beyond the theory of evolution, starting with the mystery of the chemical precursors and ending with the nature of the human Mind. In the light of these limitations, it is useful to attempt to refine emanationist doctrines, reflecting the modern concepts of quantum theory/string theory as well as evolution.

Early emanationists (Plotinus) asserted that all things 'flow out' from an underlying principle or reality, and generally saw this process in successive steps of degradation to lesser degrees of the first principle. These teachings oppose the *creation-out-of-nothing* thesis and advocate that there is an indestructible primary entity from which everything can (at least potentially) flow forth. The world religions have partly adopted this idea, but still tend to couple it to a creationist doctrine. It will be clear that the critique of Spencer applies to these doctrines, and it brings us no further. However, there might be just a '*natural principle*' in a '*practically infinite*' space-time that produces the first emanations, as alluded to in the Hermetic and Gnostic citations of the previous chapters. That these first emanations may not necessarily be understood in terms of perfection, but rather as a change of *state* or *quality* is also something we must clearly realise. Thus, it should be possible to formulate an emanation theory in the fashion of the theory of the *Implicate Order* and that of *Hidden Variables*.

As with the role of the Hesperides, guarding the golden apples, we should hold on to some of the views of the ancient doctrines and try to view them in terms of the modern theories, such that we can find new understanding and especially new meaning. For all, we should try to avoid the predicament of Modern Man that in his freedom, his self-generated heroism leads to his annihilation in a commodified world. Without a sense of *meaning* his existence becomes merely a '*cosmic mistake*' or - at best - a '*glorious accident*'. Thus, the right interpretation of quantum mechanics in the light of ancient doctrines is of prime importance. As a refined concept, one should rather view our existence as the result of an ongoing process of *emergent phenomena*, based on properties of underlying, smaller scale phenomena and '*realities*', as they come together in larger conglomerates, e.g. in the way the Theosophists in their treatise of the *Occult Chemistry* picture the nuclei to *emerge* in four levels of organisation. When formulated in conformity with modern theories of *Emergentism* and *Vitalism* we may come closer to the truth. Of course, we should be careful: we are here on highly speculative grounds, but we may endeavour to take it at least a small step further. If we take *Strings* as the *first* level, they may form the basis of our elementary particles, but are also proposed here as the source of the '*spiritual element*'. It is here not to be understood in the conventional way as something 'higher' that gives us all these great 'inspirational' works of art or scientific notions, but rather as the underlying process of this. So, the spiritual element underlies the mental, but the mental is already a commixture of the spiritual and the material elements³. The strings have certain attributes, such as the elementary particles have, but they jump in and out of existence in the form of string/anti-string pairs. They continuously

³ See "*The spiritual sense of Hadamah*" by Sigismund Bacstrom, Glasgow University, Ferguson Collection MS 134/5.

annihilate or they mingle and transform thitherto into a persistent state. This selection of ‘dominant’ strings furnishes the next level of emergence: the atomic and molecular world with the primeval attributes of mind and matter. As the state of atoms and molecules are portrayed in vectors of complex numbers, we may speculate that mind and matter are entangled or encoded within the state vector in their real and imaginary parts. The first question now arises: what is the basis of our rather limited set of elementary particles which determines so much of our observed reality? There must literally be an endless variety of them possible. What causes some of them to be so dominant and evidently free from anti-matter, is still a complete riddle to the scientific community. Steven Hawking proposed the creation of matter happens at the edge of the black hole, but wherefrom the *selection*? In our reality they are the particles identified in the Standard Model. It appears that the elementary particles do not *emanate* from the strings in the way one would generally propose, but it seems that presently they are merely a subset of strings. Elementary particles group together in a set of atoms, which yet is limited to about 90 members. These are capable of forming a whole universe of chemical substances of perplexing complexity.

A subset of these substances forms the cell, in which we more clearly discern the emanation of life. Although we define the cell already as living, at this level life cannot be considered to be more than a regulatory unit for processing chemical information, which it does in a rather perplexing way with a myriad of (proposedly dead) cell components, and where an abundant collection of small chemical substances seem to mediate instructions to the cell how to develop and what to do. The next step, the growth of a complete multicellular species out of the cells into functional organs resembles the lower level emanation: organs comprise a subset of cells which are

specialised or selected to contribute, and bring about the function of the organ. Finally, the organs together form the autonomous creature, which in its highest forms acquire ‘self-consciousness’ and the notion of ‘free will’ characteristic to Man. That this self-consciousness is bound up with memory, implemented in a typical way through the neurons, is clearly established. Still, it is good to realise that the neurons still reside partly in the quantum domain, although the macroscopic body of the organism and most of its functions lie strongly in the classical domain. Ultimately, we may propose that our civilisation emanates from all the self-conscious members of it, and yet carries its own (largely utilitarian) characteristics. Therefore, in the light of this hierarchy of emanations we may find a proximate answer the question: ‘*where lies the meaning of this existence?*’ namely: ‘*to serve the higher level of emanation*’, although this level is largely unknown to us.

The quantum mind quandary

As introduced earlier, David Bohm proposed a framework of an ‘*undivided wholeness*’, an implicate order from which reality (the explicate order) arises as we experience it. The implicate order thus comprises both matter and consciousness, and reality is seen as projections from the underlying implicate order into the observed, explicate order. In his monograph on Quantum Theory, Bohm makes an attempt to bring thought processes into the realm of quantum processes, although only as an analogy (chapter 8 - ‘*An Attempt to Build a Physical Picture of the Quantum Nature of Matter*³⁴’):

If a person tries to observe what he is thinking about at the very moment he is reflecting on a particular subject, it is generally agreed that he introduces unpredictable and uncontrollable changes in the way his thoughts proceed hereafter. If we compare (1) the instantaneous state of a thought with the position of a particle and (2) the general direction

of change of that thought with the particle's momentum, we have a strong analogy [with quantum processes].

We must remember, however, that a person can always describe approximately what he is thinking about without introducing significant disturbances in his train of thought. But as he tries to make the description precise, he discovers that either the subject of his thoughts or their trend or sometimes both become very different from what they were before he tried to observe them. Thus, the actions involved in making any single aspect of the thought process definitive appear to introduce unpredictable and incontrollable changes in other equally significant aspects."

The analogy, however, can be driven somewhat further into the realms of *types* of thought: indeed concentration on a *specific* process, including thought itself, always requires a very conscious attempt of *active* thought that we apply when we are fully awake and in the contemplative mood, or when we need to do some specific task accurately. However, what about these thoughts that occur all the time in the background, or which occur when we are not fully conscious, as in dreams or half awake? It is clearly established that in the case of unconscious thought the mind wanders off to completely unpredictable spheres, which still have the characteristics of a very real world. Anybody who has experienced his dreams and has tried to remember them must have noticed that the trains of thought are not entirely logical. Particularly somebody who has experienced lucid dreams comes at some point in his dream to the conclusion that '*this must be a dream*', and then soon he awakes. Within the wholeness concept, however, this sphere of subjective thought likely has to be seen as a complementary aspect of thought, even of reality. The difficulty here, naturally, is that it is unconscious - or only partly conscious - and thus goes unobserved for the larger part. In the rule, the parts of our dreams we remember are ones we wake up with.

Like the Pythia sitting on the Tripod, the ideas that come to the mind are of the type of the *Einfall*, for lack of an equivalent English noun, which fades from memory swiftly. However, we oftentimes keep pondering about dreams when they have been very forceful, or always keep returning in different guises. Concentrating on the particulars of the dream doesn't help us forward, because the meaning of the dream largely resides in the context in which the dream occurred. It is as if drawn from a larger realm, with interconnections to '*the whole of life*', but then this realisation urges the observer back to the path of reality and logic, and thus the mere mechanistic observation of reality does not help us much to understand the whole process of consciousness. It is on this issue that Herbert Spencer, in his *First Principles*, gives a useful hint in his chapter on 'The Relativity of all Knowledge':

"There remains the final question - What must we say concerning that which transcends knowledge? Are we to rest wholly in the consciousness of phenomena? Is the result of inquiry to exclude utterly from our minds everything but the relative? - or must we also believe in something beyond the relative?"

The answer of pure logic is held to be that by the limits of our intelligence we are rigorously confined within the relative, and that anything transcending the relative can be thought of as a pure negation, or as a non-existence. "The absolute is conceived merely by a negation of conceivability," writes Sir William Hamilton. "The Absolute and the Infinite," says Mr. Mansel "are thus, like the inconceivable and the imperceptible, names indicating, not an object of thought or of consciousness at all, but the mere absence of the conditions under which consciousness is possible," so that since reason cannot warrant us in affirming the positive existence of that which is cognizable only as a negation, we cannot rationally affirm the positive existence of anything beyond phenomena."^{<39>}

At this point, Spencer leads us back to reality, starting with the premise that Hamilton and Mansel presented: that they are imperfect statements excluding the notion of an *indefinite consciousness*, which cannot be (logically) formulated:

"Besides complete thoughts, and besides the thoughts which - though incomplete - admit of completion, there are thoughts which it is impossible to complete, and yet which are still real, in the sense that they are normal affections of the intellect."

Observe, in the first place, that every one of the arguments by which the relativity of our knowledge is demonstrated, distinctly postulates the positive existence of something beyond the relative. To say that we cannot know the absolute, is, by implication, to affirm that there is an absolute. In the very denial of our power to learn what the absolute is, there lies hidden the assumption that it is; and the making of this assumption proves that the Absolute has been present to the mind, not as a nothing but as a something. Similarly with every step in the reasoning by which this doctrine is upheld. The Noumenon, everywhere named as the antithesis to the Phenomenon, is necessarily thought of as an actuality. It is impossible to conceive that our knowledge is a knowledge of Appearances only, without at the same time assuming a Reality of which they are appearances; for appearance without reality is unthinkable [rather: illogical]. Strike out from the argument the terms Unconditioned, Infinite, Absolute and write "negation of conceivability" or "absence of the conditions under which consciousness is possible," and the argument becomes nonsense. ... Clearly, then the very demonstration that a definitive consciousness of the Absolute is impossible to us, unavoidably presupposes an indefinite consciousness of it."

After rambling on for a while, Spencer arrives at his main point:

"In the very assertion that all knowledge, properly so called, is Relative, there is involved the assertion that there exists a Non-relative. In each step of the argument by which this doctrine is established,

the same assumption is made. From the necessity of thinking in relations, it follows that the Relative is itself inconceivable, except as related to a real Non-relative. Unless a real Non-relative or Absolute be postulated, the Relative itself becomes absolute, and so brings the argument to a contradiction. And on watching our thoughts we have seen how impossible it is to get rid of the consciousness of an Actuality lying behind Appearances; and how, from this impossibility, results our indestructible belief in that Actuality.”

He then proposes his reconciliation (of the *Relative* with the *Absolute* and likewise *Science* with *Religion*) as follows:

“Common Sense asserts the existence of a reality; Objective Science proves that this reality cannot be what we think it [to be]; Subjective Science shows why we cannot think of it as it is, and yet are compelled to think of it as existing; and in this assertion of a Reality utterly inscrutable in nature, Religion finds an assertion essentially coinciding with her own. We are obliged to regard every phenomenon as a manifestation of some Power by which we are acted upon; though Omnipresence is unthinkable, yet, as experience discloses no bounds to the diffusion of phenomena, we are unable to think of limits to the presence of this Power; while the criticisms of Science teach us that this Power is Incomprehensible. And this consciousness of an Incomprehensible Power, called Omnipresent from inability to assign its limits, is just that consciousness on which Religion dwells.”

In his reconciliation, Spencer comes up with a noteworthy argument, namely that the discoveries in *Science* - which have shown earlier religious notions to have been erratic - are in their ultimate sense more and more abstract, and therefore more and more incomprehensible, therefore leaving religion in a stronger position. He perceives moreover that *Science* has rather assumed the role of ‘purifying’ Religion. As an example, he quotes the earlier belief of some ancient cultures that regarded the Sun as the chariot of the God, drawn by horses.

However, presently we remain as blinded pigeons in the sunshine of our contemporary theories, which propose gravitation as the main force of the galactic order, shaping the whole of space-time down to the intricacies of black holes, where the macroscopic meets the microscopic. The cause and nature of the gravitational field is presently better understood as in Spencer's time, but it doesn't invalidate his main tenet:

"Thus it is with Science in general. Its progress in grouping particular relations of phenomena under laws more and more general is of necessity a progress to causes more and more abstract. And causes more and more abstract are of necessity causes less and less conceivable; since the formation of an abstract conception involves the dropping of certain concrete elements of thought. And so is justified the assertion that the beliefs which Science has forced upon Religion have been intrinsically more religious than those which they supplant."

Truly, when considering the present debates on the Mind-Matter controversy, sometimes the brilliant minds of contemporary scientists show the haphazardness of restatement of ideas of others mingled with a new scientific notion, such as the tenets of Roger Penrose who re-embroidered the idea of Niels Bohr (p. 170 in^{<35>}) as follows:

'One might speculate, however, that somewhere deep in the brain, cells are to be found of single quantum sensitivity. If this proves to be the case, then quantum mechanics will be significantly involved in brain activity.'^{<52>}

He posed this from the point of view of wave function collapse being the only possible physical basis for a '*non-computable process*'. However, the effects of randomness in the brain function was deemed detrimental to stability of the brain, and thus he proposed a new form of wave function collapse as a '*non-computable influence*' in space-time geometry from which mathematical understanding and, by further extension, a

concept of consciousness could be derived, and called it '*orchestrated objective reduction*'. This was seen as a collapse of the wave function in the neurons on the basis of general relativity, including gravitation. This manipulation of quantum states by some outer source (gravitation) would then suggest that gravitational fields have a strong effect on our conscious experience! Does this type of argumentation not adequately illustrate the point Spencer was making? Consciousness has remained quite beyond any type of understandable scientific theory. However, we will now draw into our earlier subject matter the very latest ideas in this scientific field.

Matter, Memory and Spirit

We try to find tentative answers to the following questions:

1. How can mental processes (still mostly considered non-physical) affect physical processes without violating the rules of causality?
2. How are we to understand the mental phenomena of Creativity, Meaning, Will and Intelligence as neural processes?
3. How do neural processes give rise to conscious experiences, creating a '*virtual reality*'?
4. How is the human mind related to that of 'God'?

As far as it is possible, we like to answer the questions in this exact order. The ultimate '*definition*' of God may not be given in too concrete terms, but at least one could progress to an understanding of how God should *not* be comprehended!

As stated in chapter 2, the three ancient muses of Mount Helicon were named Aoidē ('song'), Meletē ('practice'), and Mnēmē ('memory'). These three sisters reflect in a very subtle way the three-levelled structure of the conscious universe to which we alluded in the preceding chapters. If we tentatively associate Aoidē with the spiritual, Meletē with the material and

Mnēmē with the memory aspects of the conscious universe, the three sisters represent something of the *cycle of music*, as an allegory to the life cycle in general. It leads us back to the world of music: how we generally go about making music and how we actually learn to make music. For the composer the main struggle is to grasp the essential idea (*song*) into memory and put it to paper (*practice and memory*). The *Song* is usually very compact, but in a strange way inspiring, and it locks itself in his mind (going straight into memory). It is like a seedling asking to be developed, and through *practice*, the idea is encircled, variations combined, re-developed, restated and so forth. For the musician's part, the process of recreating the original idea is his main struggle: how to get it memorised from the source (by practice) and find the essential idea back⁴. For the attentive listener a similar rule holds, as the experience of music is only effective if he likewise holds the idea and its progression in memory. However, this memory is only possible by following the flow of ideas, where he holds the immediate past and the present in the brain together: the musical notes from the past are experienced as '*transformations*' rather than '*memories*'. In Bohm's vocabulary, the notes that were *implicate* in the immediate past become *explicate* in the present, and so consciousness emerges from the implicate order as a fully coherent movement, change or flow. The coherence of experiences, such as listening to music, could be seen as a proper analogy of the holomovement. It is clear that formulating neural processes merely as computational processes will not do, and assigning quantum states, or even strings, to mental or spiritual components is a very static concept. When it is formulated in the frame of Bohm's notions of *active information*, we are closer to understand how mental processes can act on classically describable neural processes

⁴. see Nikolai Medtner's book "The Muse and the Fashion" for more detail.

without upsetting the causal order. This silver idea cannot be easily transformed into a golden theory: David Bohm was not able to propose a concrete mechanism by which the implicate order could emerge in a way relevant to consciousness^{[53](#)}, but recently Eccles proposed^{[53](#)}, based on an idea by Henry Margenau^{[54](#)}, that a ‘*mind-field*’ could affect the probabilities of transitions between quantum states, and that this process takes place at certain location in the neurons, e.g. in the neuronal synapses or in the microtubules. This is logical when the quantum state is viewed as both memory *and* transformation in the form of *active information*. This is fully compatible with the formalism of the Schrödinger equation. Along this line we propose that the *objective reduction* proposed by Penrose is rather to be viewed as a *latent limitation of quantum states*, much in the way of Sheldrake’s ‘*habits of nature*’: a large store of quantum states that directs the evolution of quantum states by a process we could call the *Universal Memory*, reminiscent of the *Pleroma* of the Gnostics. Thus, we come closer to a concept of the ‘*Will*’, the ‘*Strife of Mind over Matter*’, and finally to that of a ‘*Divine Sublimation*’. An attempt is here made below to build a model of the *mental universe*. The key idea is that the mind/body is seen as a unity of a physical and spiritual aspect in the way of complex numbers as they are represented in the Hilbert vector space. Thus, in the Bohm interpretation of quantum physics an entirely new type of information plays an active role in (macroscopic) physical processes. This concept is certainly not strange to the physical world: for instance in the electromagnetic theory various seemingly unrelated phenomena can be combined in complex number formalisms, such as conductivity, light absorption and refractive index into the complex dielectric constant. Thus, the division of the mind into thought, emotion and will constituents is fairly arbitrary, since they should only be understood as *aspects* of the mind.

(The Rosicrucian Trinitarian Unity of the Ibis, the Fire and the Altar is our symbolistic way of representing the matter/mind relation in this context.) The question how mental processes can affect physical processes without violating the rules of causality was already the subject of a long-winded but not insignificant treatise of Gilbert Ryle in 1949. Ryle discarded Descartes' theory of the relation between mind and body (which he called '*the ghost in the machine*') on grounds that it is impossible to view mental processes as isolated from physical processes^{<55>}. The thought, emotion and will qualities of the mind were seen by him as mere workings of the mind and intrinsically inseparable from the actions of the body:

It has for a long time been taken for an indisputable axiom that the Mind is in some important sense tripartite, that is, that there are just three ultimate classes of mental processes. The Mind or Soul, we are often told, has three parts, namely, Thought, Feeling and Will; or, more solemnly, the Mind or Soul functions in three irreducibly different modes, the Cognitive mode, the Emotional mode and the Conative mode. This traditional dogma is not only not self-evident, it is such a welter of confusions and false inferences that it is best to give up any attempt to re-fashion it. It should be treated as one of the curios of theory...

His refutation of the doctrine against a separate faculty of the Will to enable intelligent acts, however, rested on rather weak arguments.⁵ When attempting to describe the causality or non-

⁵ As he poses: (1) there have never been any examples of explicitly stated *volitions* leading to any specific act [*sic*], (2) a person can never witness the volitions of another; he can only infer it from an observed action, and then only if he has any good reason to believe that the action was a voluntary one, and not a reflex or habitual action, or one resulting from some external physical cause [*volitions can be expressed*], (3) if a causal connection between the will and intelligent acts is assumed, it leads to a contraction of the second part of the theory that presumes the non-causal connection, (4) if some mental processes, according to the theory, issue from volitions, then a paradox arises with respect to points 2 and 3.

causality of intelligent acts, it is fair to quote at this point David Bohm's stance on this matter^{<2>}:

This means that which we experience as mind, in its movement through various levels of subtlety, will, in a natural way ultimately move the body by reaching the level of the quantum potential and of the 'dance' of the particles. There is no unbridgeable gap or barrier between any of these levels. Rather, at each stage some kind of information is the bridge. This implies that the quantum potential acting on atomic particles, for example, represents only one stage in the process. The content of our own consciousness is then some part of this overall process. It is thus implied that in some sense a rudimentary mind-like quality is present even at the level of particle physics, and that as we go to subtler levels this mind-like quality becomes stronger and more developed. Each kind and level of mind may have a relative autonomy and stability. One may then describe the essential mode of relationship of all these as participation, recalling that this word has two basic meanings, to partake of, and to take part in. Through enfoldment, each relatively autonomous kind and level of mind to one degree or another partakes of the whole. Through this it partakes of all the others in its 'gathering' of information. And through the activity of this information, it similarly takes part in the whole and in every part. It is in this sort of activity that the content of the more subtle and implicate levels is unfolded (e.g. as the movement of the particle unfolds the meaning of the information that is implicit in the quantum field and as the movement of the body unfolds what is implicit in subtler levels of thought, feeling, etc.). For the human being, all of this implies a thoroughgoing wholeness, in which mental and physical sides participate very closely in each other. Likewise, intellect, emotion, and the whole state of the body are in a similar flux of fundamental participation. Thus, there is no real division between mind and matter, psyche and soma. The common term psychosomatic is in this way seen to be misleading, as it suggests the Cartesian notion of two distinct substances in some kind of interaction (if not through the action of God, then perhaps in some other way).

However, this holistic ‘*flux mechanism*’ is with biological systems rather questionable, since the aspects of consciousness seem to lie on the border of the molecular and so-called supra-molecular level, particularly processes in neurons. Brian Josephson suggested recently something in this direction^{<56>}:

“The perception of reality by biosystems is based on different, and in certain respects more effective principles than those utilised by the more formal procedures of science. As a result, what appears as a random pattern to the scientific method can be a meaningful pattern to a living organism. The existence of this complementary perception of reality makes possible in principle effective use by organisms of the direct interconnections between spatially separated objects shown to exist in the work of J.S. Bell.”

Of particular interest are his comments on ‘randomness’ and focussing:

These arguments lead us to the conclusion that, because of the different kind of perceptual and interpretative processes characteristic of life compared with those of science, living organisms can possess knowledge that is more detailed in certain aspects than is the knowledge specified by the quantum theory. One may talk in terms of higher discrimination and selectivity, which improvements can be attributed to a different kind of contact with nature. ... From the point of view of a causal model such as that of Bohm's, alternative kinds of probability distribution in phase space become relevant. In general terms, these distributions can be characterised as being highly focussed in relation to the organism's specific goals. Such focused behaviour in living organisms is typified by, for example, the activities of a tightrope walker, or of a darts player. Efficient focussing comes into being naturally over the course of time as the consequence of processes of trial and error learning occurring during the developmental process. Our assumption in relation to psi functioning is that here also the relevant probability distributions are highly focussed in relation to goals, in a way that may become more effective over time as development through learning takes place.

It seems that the arguments are all revolving around the correct comprehension of entanglement, and how seemingly random processes at the quantum scale may have a hidden meaning:

"In the biological world, evolution through natural selection tends to give rise to adaptive elaborations of pre-existing phenotypes (manifest behaviour). Thus a primitive sensitivity to light becomes elaborated into more discriminating sensitivities and ultimately into fully detailed vision. In the case of psi [functioning] one may similarly anticipate the development of forms of organisation of the nervous system capable of interacting non-locally with other systems. ..."

One may imagine that life existed from the beginning [in reference to: J. E. Lovelock (1990) Nature 344, 100] as a cooperative whole directly interconnected at a distance by Bell type non-local interactions, following which modifications through the course of evolution cause organisms to be interconnected directly with each other and with objects to an extent that is adapted to circumstances. One can see conceptual similarities between psi skills and ordinary skills, e.g. between the perceptual skills of hearing and telepathy on the one hand, and between the forms of control of matter involved in the control of the body and in psychokinesis on the other. From this point of view, it is only in regard to the mode of interaction that the ordinary phenomena and the analogous paranormal ones differ from each other."

For addressing the four questions at the beginning of this section, another fragment from this publication is enlightening:

*"The strategy of science leads towards the accurate specification of **form**, while that of life leads in the direction of **meaning**. These two directions, form and meaning, are the two components of David Bohm's concept relating to the universal nature of things, 'soma-significance'. Meaning is an aspect of reality tied to the achievement of goals and to specific context that is sufficiently subtle and complex as not to be representable by any closed formula. Furthermore, the technique of statistical averaging is especially irrelevant in the context of meaning, since its influence in general is to transform the 'meaningful' into the 'meaningless'.*

"It is not useful to consider the meaning of a particular word averaged over all languages, and computing the statistics of word order and frequency in a discourse tells one very little about the meaning of the discourse. Investigations into meaning are investigations in a different direction to that in which one is led by scientific investigations into reproducible form. But science is involved with the accurate specification of form, and this enforces the kind of 'formal' specification of nature characteristic of quantum measurement theory. This contrasts with the philosophical informality of classical physics with its naive realism. The perceptual and interpretative processes of living organisms do not admit of the formal specifications demanded by quantum measurement theory."

This brings us back to the consideration that for the evolution into self-conscious living creatures, the mere observation of detached forms is not sufficient: we always reach for a *meaningful understanding* of reality, and for this we may have developed an intuitive feeling for non-local connections.

I like to illustrate this with a personal example. Once in my youth I was travelling by bus to the nearest town and I was considering taking up driving lessons, because I was dismayed that the bus was late. Although I felt it would mean giving up the '*green attitude*' I had always adhered to, going about mostly by bike and foot and sometimes with public transportation, I thought it would give me more freedom. This loose thought had just passed through my head when the bus ran over a cat: it was tossed sideways and I saw it flying through the air, landing in a bush beside the road, the poor creature likely having given up its last - ninth - life. I immediately felt a connection: I realised that I had *vouched* I would never drive a car, so I returned to it, and it would be nearly twenty years before I changed my mind, and only then because the busy family life more or less demanded it. We may call it a '*silly superstition*', but the fact remains that the events, in my mind, were clearly connected.

Much in the same spirit the offerings that ancient people carried to their gods and goddesses, either for tuning fate in their favour or obtaining advice or other, we should take cognisance of this fact that our minds are connected, and that these ‘*intuitive*’ connections may be the basis of our self-consciousness as well as the awareness of a higher spiritual realm. There is for us this ‘*other reality*’, which is considered to be subjective by science, but the subjective reality is still a confirmed reality - a point C. G. Jung was untiringly advancing against much opposition. One might call it the ‘*imaginary part*’ of reality, as seen in the complex number phase space of quantum states, and the physiognomy of the numinous *Strings*. We will now try to make this more tangible.

When we draw together all the previous concepts presented in the modern theories and in the Theosophical realm, we arrive at the following tentative model (Fig. 8 and Table I):

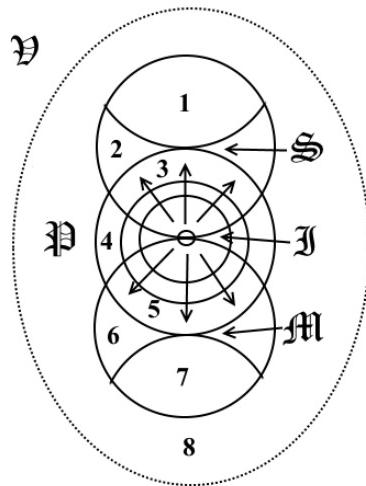


Figure 8. The Master Diagram of Three-Tiered Universe. V=the void, P=the Pleroma, S=the Spiritual domain, I=the (derived) mental domain, and M=the Material domain. The dominions are numbered from 1 to 8.

Table I. Equivalence of gnostic terms that have been used in different civilisations.

<i>Dominion planet</i>	<i>Chinese I Ching</i>	<i>Hindi Vedas</i>	<i>Greek Gnostic</i>	<i>Jewish Kabbalah</i>	<i>Gnostic Christian</i>
¹ Neptune	 Heaven	Atma	Pneuma (Apollo)	Kether (Ein Soph)	The Monad
² Saturn	 Lake	Budhi		Binah/Hokmah	Barbelo
³ Jupiter	 Fire	Higher Manas	Nous= Psyche/ Pneuma	Da'at	Autogenes (Christ)
⁴ Venus	 Thunder	Lower Manas	Psyche	Gevurah/Hesed	Armozel
⁵ Uranus	 Wind	Kama rupa	Ego=Soma/ Psyche (Mnemosyne)	Tiferet	Oriel
⁶ Mercurius	 Water	Linga Sharira	Soma	Hod/Netzah	Daveithai
⁷ Tellus	 Mountain	Sthula Sharira		Yesod (Guph)	Eleleth
⁸ Mars	 Earth	Akasha	Pleroma (Pytho)	Malhut	Yaltabaoth

Here we partly reproduce the backbone Democritus presented in his last scroll, but with some refinement in the structure: in this scheme, the central point of contact of the Spiritual and Material realms produces Mind through active information present in the spiritual realm, but expanding into the material and spiritual realms as well as in the Pleroma⁶. This is the *outbreathing*, so called by Mead, marked by the arrows in Fig. 8. This illustrates conquering of the latent information in the Pleroma by the active Mind.

⁶ This system is described in far more detail in von Wellings *Opus Mago-Cabalisticum et Theosophicum*, under the heading *Clavis Operis*.

In Table I there is some lack of correspondence of terms, but the overall structure illustrates the eight ‘*dominions*’. The most important of these are dominion 3 (soul) and 5 (thought), which can be seen as mirror images of the Mind in the lower and upper realms. The model represents fairly well our brotherhood’s views of the ‘Aeonic’ creation sequence. It proceeds from the *Monad* via the feminine principle (*Barbelon*, Earth Mother, *Maria*) through the light spirits *Armozel* (grace, truth, and form), *Oriel* (conception, perception, and memory), *Daveithai*, (understanding, love, and idea) and *Eleleth* (perfection, peace, and wisdom), down to the ‘*artificer*’, which can be viewed as the necessary acting creator, to which many names and terms apply. The actual level on which the Mind-Matter phenomenon occurs (intersection point I in Fig. 8) must be put on the supra-molecular, particularly within the neurons, not the sub-molecular (string), but we may presume the hidden variables to the sub-molecular or atomic to lie on the string level, which is likely a lower lying less complex quantum level.

Quantum States and fractals

The ambiguity in the literature about the nature of the ‘*quantum state*’ often raises confusion. For instance, in the matrix mechanics formalism, lying at the basis of the Copenhagen ‘*non-interpretation*’ of quantum mechanics, the quantum state entails nothing more than a vector of complex numbers, $|\psi_i\rangle$, renormalizable to an orthogonal set $a_i|n_i\rangle$, where a_i are numbered coefficients. It is said to contain all the information that can be known about the system. Solving the Schrödinger equation for ψ predicts how particles will behave under the influence of the specified potential and with each other. Still, as the quantum state is not further interpreted, the complex numbered vectors might assume a certain intrinsic structure and coherence, of which we may derive the Platonian ‘*forms*’. One hint in this direction was given by Democritus in

his argument in support of atomism from the observation of *phase transitions*. He claimed that when ice melts to water or when water is turned into steam, these big changes in physical state are caused by small changes in atomic scale properties. Another hint was provided when I was introduced to the four mosaics of the chapel of our monastery portraying the ‘*Four Lights of Christ*’, of which one of our brothers pointed out that: “*they are of Damascene origin, and depict the foundations of our spiritual life, and as guides they must have some relation to the intrinsic energy of spiritual states*”. The mosaics are presented in Figure 9 on the next page. Looking for an ‘*intrinsic energy*’ term in the two primary equations of quantum mechanics for a more general description, we could possibly search for an equation that is not in itself dependent on any dimensions, but only how energy is related to the wave function itself, as we would expect for the *Prime Mover*. This would mean computing a double integral in complex number space of equation II.A in some form (see a general approach in Addendum B), yielding some polynomial equation in Ψ . We recently learned that figures like those in figure 9 have some resemblance to ‘fractals’, as described in a recent monograph by Benoit B. Mandelbrot^{<57>}. One particular form of fractal was found in the description of magnetic phase transitions in metals as a function of temperature, which follows originally from the theories of Yang and Lee, but which takes on clear fractal dimensions, according to the recursive quadratic equation^{<58>}:

$$\Psi' = \left[\frac{\Psi^2 + C - 1}{2\Psi + C - 2} \right]^2$$

The link with magnetism is interesting, as it coincides with the treatise on the *Hadamah* by Bacstrom and the hyper-meta-proto-elemental matter, as discussed by the theosophists in the *Occult Chemistry*.

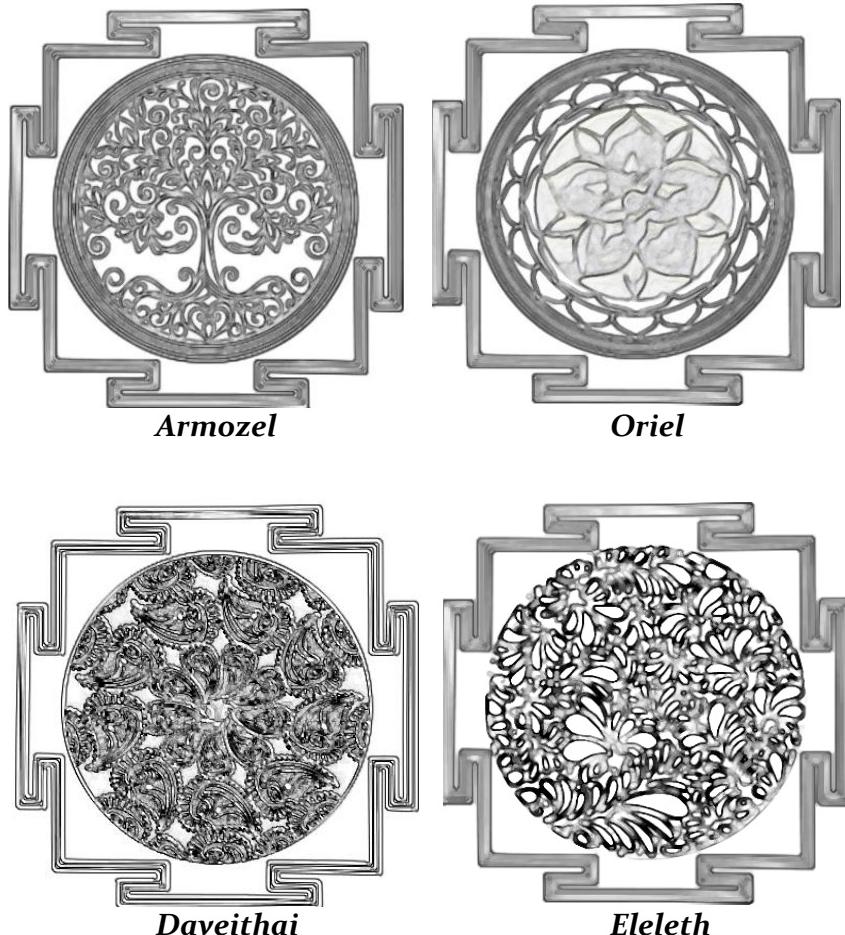


Figure 9. 'The Lights of Christ', the four tantras as displayed in the Monastery at Maleme.

Whether ‘*elemental spirits*’ could be mathematically resurrected in this way - via a fractal representation - sounded initially somewhat feeble. However, the final results were not uninteresting. An approximate fit with the ‘*magnet fractal*’ was found to the patterns as follows:

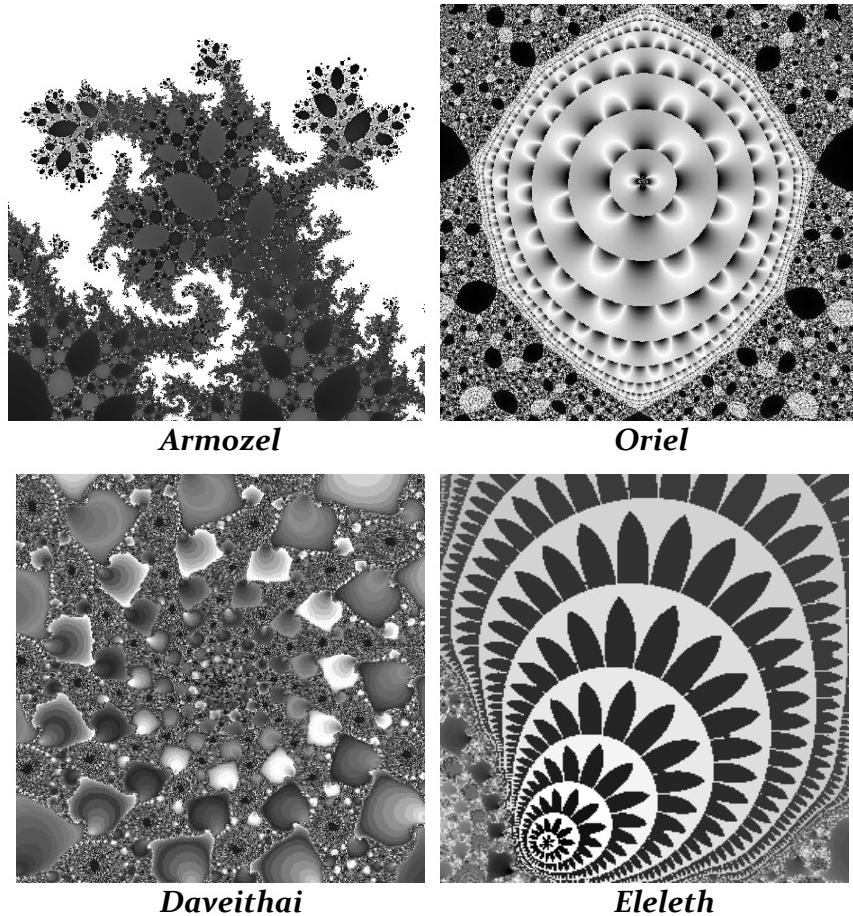


Figure 10. The fractal patterns generated by applying the Magnet equation. The shades of grey indicate the intensity of the derivative of the wave function.

It is well known that the tree and leaf figures of the mosaics of Figure 9 are of Persian origin. They also resemble to some extent the Paisley textiles, known in the UK. So, it might be worthwhile to investigate if the Persians knew more about fundamental energy distributions on the lowest levels, as proposed above, and their relation to phase transitions.

Thus, it may well be that the Platonic forms arise already from the lowest levels, and it seems reasonable to assume a level of hidden variables (or rather hidden *structure*) in the implicate order of things, based on the mere properties of complex numbers in relation to themselves. They clearly have a *fractal nature* and could have a role in defining the universe by changing the probability distributions of the wave vector.

Part IV - Spring



1

LE BATELEUR

X

11. Uranus

And if ever the suspicion of their manifold being dawns upon men of unusual powers and of unusually delicate perceptions, so that, as all genius must, they break through the illusion of the unity of the personality and perceive that the self is made up of a bundle of selves, they have only to say so and at once the majority puts them under lock and key, calls science to aid, establishes schizophrenia and protects humanity from the necessity of hearing the cry of truth from the lips of these unfortunate persons.

Hermann Hesse, *Steppenwolf*

THAT the spring of 2022 presented a major turning point in human history towards real development and enlightenment is not generally acknowledged. The only thing we seem to remember of that year is a worsening food and energy crisis in the still isolated part of England proper. Although the Scottish republic was still somewhat better off, the price of petrol and electricity skyrocketed also there and the precious hydrogen car of my grandparents had become useless during the winter. The shortage of hydrogen fuel was mainly due to the circumstance that it had become too expensive to produce it from electricity. However, Sheila and Michael cosily went shopping on their new bikes. Michael had planned some rest after a hectic winter with lots of travelling and investigation. After his extended trip to Greece he had been visiting Phrygia, Madeira and Crete. The last country that remained on the list was somewhat conspicuous: After getting married with Andrew Stevens, a wealthy banker, Monica had taken up a PhD project in the coral reef before the coast of Belize, and she had extended an invitation to Maria, Marco, Sheila and Michael to come and visit. The trip to this country, of which few in Ayrshire had even heard, was planned for the next summer.

After her rescue, Maria resettled with Marco in Faial in the new home that she had been able to enjoy only very shortly before the missions in Damascus and Delphi. The imposing Tiloch mansion had

been demolished after a deluge in 2015 and a real estate developer bought the plot of land, but it was difficult to sell. Up till this day it is a lonely pasture the Madeirans avoid. In the winter, Maria had frequently visited Scotland and given a few concerts, mainly in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Her piano concerto had been on the program and it was considered the most Scottish piano concerto since Alexander MacKenzie. It had been a moderate success, and it had at least motivated Pierce to start studying on it. Of course in his pursuit he was fired on by Maria, who provided many technical tips. Maria spent also some time in Muirkirk with Sheila, reviving her cousin's enthusiasm for the violin. However, for Michael all the musical aspirations of Pierce and Sheila remained somewhat in the background, because he was delving in the Birmingham police archives to get to know the last about Benji Miller's Banbury tale of '*the Lost Archaeology Professor*'. Besides he was reading about the early beginnings of Life, which was to be condensed into a monograph, and only when he found the time he caught up with some guitar playing.

At the beginning of April, however, the thing came about that Michael had anticipated in one way or another. It arrived in the form of a large black limousine driving up to the Muirkirk farm carrying some very high-level people. They inconspicuously arrived in the early morning when Michael and Sheila were having breakfast. Sandy barked nervously, indicating that there might be unruly folk approaching, but against all appearances a neatly dressed man in a blue-grey suit orderly knocked at the door. Sheila opened and the visitor addressed her in a muffled voice.

"We are awfully sorry Ma'am, to disturb you at the crack of dawn, but we urgently need to speak to your husband!" he said with a polite nod of his head.

"Oh... You are lucky... He is just having his breakfast," said Sheila. Then she yelled inside "Mike! You are wanted!" She then moved inside to restrain Sandy, who was still growling with suspicion.

Michael carefully stepped out of the kitchen towards the front door,

and still with a sandwich in his hand said: “Yes... what’s up?”

“Can we have a word in private?” the man asked.

“Who is calling?” Michael inquired.

“Vice-president Schumer,” the man said gesticulating in the direction of a sizable limousine.

“You mean, Chuck Schumer, the American vice-president?”

“Yep, he’s there, in that car, Sir,” the young man said in a slightly offhand way, pointing towards the vehicle.

“Oh dear!” said Michael.

He stepped outside and marched on towards the car where he could make out a well-tanned chauffeur and in the back he recognized Chuck Schumer, the former US senator of New York who had become vice-president to Bernie Sanders only a few months earlier. Bernie still had a few months to go in the presidency. At this time, very caustic elections were held, but Bernie had not lost any grip on his electorate. He would likely be re-elected. Michael peeped into the car through the back door on the left, and addressed the vice-president.

“Morning, Sir,” he said jovially, “Something up?”

“Yes, sorry for the early intrusion,” Schumer said, “We need your help in an awful predicament.”

“I suppose it is Delphi,” said Michael.

“Rightly guessed!” said Schumer. “I read you have last year, just before Christmas, had contact with General Clancy of the SMA in Greece?”

“Yes, we had a short talk of some kind in front of the gate of the US military base in Delphi.”

“It is not a military base, if that’s what you think. It is an SMA, an investigation site.”

“Saw a lot of military staff around there!” said Michael. “What’s an SMA?”

“A Special Missions Agency. We have some of those here and there. So, to come to the point: we have come across a written account of General Clancy that you offered assistance if things would go wrong,”

said Schumer.

“I did, yes. Must I conclude that now something went wrong?”

“You may conclude that, yes. We have reason to believe you are the only person who can help us with this. We are all at odds what to do.”

“So... what happened?”

“The General has disappeared with a whole investigation team. He was investigating the Omphalos, and the whole group just didn’t return. Now there are these disturbing gravitational waves and nobody dares to go near the place. We call it *The Pit*. I would like to urge you to come with us and explain to us what you know.”

“Ah,” Michael exclaimed, “Pytho has been aroused again, after all this time.”

“Sorry, Mister Willmore, do not talk in riddles, please. The point is: the Delphi site has become unstable. People can hardly keep to their feet down there. There are short periods of strong local disturbances in the gravitational field near the Omphalos. We expect a major collapse of the site again. Can you help us?”

“I think I can, but I need a few assistants and some tools.”

“If needed we can fly you all to Delphi in no time.”

“If we have no time to lose,” said Michael, “then I’ll get my stuff.” He ran inside, and shouted to Sheila, who was still standing in the open door: “It has begun!”

“What do you mean?” asked Sheila.

“It is Pytho! I have to go.” He rushed upstairs and packed a rucksack quickly. He also visited the attic, where he collected a small package. When he came down, he hugged Sheila: “Can you manage? I must be off to Delphi again. I surely hope it is the last time.”

Sheila passed a long sigh. They kissed, and then Michael hopped out the front door. When they were well underway, Michael called Maria in Faial on his mobile.

There was a long ring and a muffled voice said: “Hullo? Who’s calling?”

“Hello, Maria... It’s Mike here... from Muirkirk,” he hesitated.

“Oh... Hello, how are you all?” Maria replied.

“Fine, fine! I say, Maria, something serious has come up. I seems Pytho is on the move again. We have to take action!”

“Oh, boy! What can I do?” asked Maria.

“I suppose it is now spring time, and your hibiscus should be soon in blossom.”

“Yes, the tree is full with new pods now.”

“Take some of them with you. Put some in a jar.”

“Do you think we need them?”

“Well, you read the papers. Better be prepared, just in case. We are soon coming to fetch you.”

“Who are *we*? ”

“The Americans, I’ll call you soon again.” Michael now directed himself to vice president Schumer. “Can you pick up my companion in Madeira?”

“We can get her to our base at Porto Santo, and from there to Delphi, sure,” Schumer beamed.

“Ok, that’s splendid. I’ll ask another person to join us, but I’m not sure he will like it very much.”

Michael called Pierce. There was also very long ring. Michael wondered whether he would have travelled with Gillian to Russia.

“Morning!” a sleepy voice said on the other end.

“Hello, Pierce. It’s Mike.”

“Hullo, hullo. Are *you* early! I was still sound asleep!”

“I think we need your urgent assistance, Pierce. Pytho is stirring in Delphi. We have to get there as soon as possible.”

“Really? Are you sure?”

“Yes, will you help?”

“Of course I will... that is... if I *can*!” said Pierce.

“Well, we at least need that sistrum that has been lying idly in your window sill. Bring it with you. We’ll soon pick you up.”

“Pick me up? From where?”

“From your Green... I suppose by some helicopter,” said Michael

looking questioningly towards Chuck Schumer.

The vice-president nodded affirmatively and said: "You will have to give me his coordinates as well!"

"Helicopter it's going to be, Pierce. Get yourself ready."

"Ok. I'll go and brush my teeth."

"Yes, but quickly."

The line broke off, and Michael uttered a sigh of relief. "Well, rests me to contact Ioannis Diamantopolis about some other instruments we might need for our task," said Michael.

"And what, if I may ask, are all these instruments you carry with you?"

"A sistrum, a lyre and a flute, a book, two mirrors and two Ibis statues."

"And what on earth are you going to do with those?!"

"Subdue Pytho, the Earth Dragon. He might be responsible for the instability of the site. He is infuriated. These instruments have to be returned to their rightful owners."

"Are you sure what you are doing?" Chuck said with an increasing glance of bewilderment.

"Oh, it has happened once before."

"And how are you going to *use* those instruments?" asked Chuck.

"I'm not certain, but if I'm right it all comes down to an honest negotiation, Mister Vice-president," said Michael.

"You? Negotiating with a mythical creature? I think it is quite preposterous to even attempt such a thing!"

"Well, you negotiated with the regime in Iran successfully, so you shouldn't be too pessimistic!"

"Touché!" the vice president chuckled.

~

Back in Faial, Marco was shaken out of his sleep by Maria. "I have to return to Delphi," she said.

"Wha?" Marco muttered.

"We have to confront Pytho," Maria explained.

“Oh, no! Not *again!*” Marco exclaimed. “Is this necessary?”

“Of course it is necessary! Do you want Him to gobble up our world, our universe?”

“What are you talking about?!”

“Sorry, but Pytho is a bit more powerful than you think.”

“OK, I’ll come with you,” said Marco. “Let’s put an end to this once and for all!”

“The only thing I need is a jar with some pods from the *hibiscus Syriacus*. Michael has some plan... But you don’t have to come with me. We’ll manage.”

“You really trust Michael? Last time he wasn’t of much help. What do you need those pods for anyway?”

“Michael said they attract Pytho and keep him under control.”

“What bloody nonsense is that! No, no! I’m coming with you. I don’t trust that Michael at all.”

“Hmm... I surely hope Michael knows his business this time. Sometimes I think Pytho is still after *me!*”

“Don’t be daft. He’ll have to deal with me first!” said Marco, throwing his blankets aside.

“That’s sweet of you, really, but against such forces the only thing that helps is the tool of persuasion.”

“Well, I’m going to be part of the show, if needed as the bait.”

“We have to hurry: they’re going to pick us up by helicopter.”

Half an hour was needed for Marco and Maria to get some easy clothes on and some food down. Then the sound of a chopper was heard in the sky. It landed right down in their garden, blowing away Maria’s precious flower pots. Maria had taken a little jar from the kitchen cupboard, and was soon filling it with some fresh pods from the hibiscus tree. The blades of the chopper did not come to rest, and she could only with some effort get them safely in her jar. No time was to be lost now, and both Maria and Marco hurried on.

It was around the same time that another helicopter landed in Pierce’s garden, the two resident peacocks running off panic stricken.

The sunshade was blown up high in the sky and landed at the other side of the house. Pierce didn't mind. Gillian was in Russia and was spared the ordeal. He packed the sistrum and ran off to the chopper.

It was thus that all persons concerned were flown over by the US Air Force to Greece. Once there, Marco, Maria, Pierce and Michael were picked up in a small bus in Itea and they made their way to the ancient site of Delphi in the company of vice president Schumer and a motley bunch of weighty army officers and absent-minded scientists. The whole area had been evacuated, because at certain intervals it was difficult for the visitors to keep on their feet. It was not so much as that the ground was moving, but some form of dizziness set on by the waviness of the force of gravitation. Presently, the gravitational field was fairly steady.

Ioannis and Michael rushed into the museum, where they re-collected the silver objects Michael had earlier donated. Then Michael proceeded to the secretive SMA station. Some more staff awaited them, and they were all shown into the high tower, which appeared to be housing a huge mining elevator. It brought them all down nearly two kilometres. Then two other elevators brought them down a few kilometres more, and finally they all stepped out and were directly shown the location of '*the Pit*'. Sulphurous gases rose from the deep, and vice president Schumer warned: "Down there the problem lies. Nobody dares to go further. You should better take gas masks down there and keep low to the ground."

"So, how many people disappeared there?" asked Michael.

"Eight persons, including General Clancy!"

"What were they up to? Did they have a plan?"

"They took that trunk with the mummy down there in the hope that something would happen. They investigated the Omphalos. Then the fluctuations of gravitational field got very strong and the trunk and the people had disappeared. Some people have gone down to check the place out, and only few were able to return safely."

"Ah! I think I need Maria with me," said Michael. "So, how are we

to go down?"

"We can winch you down there in this steel cage - by cable," one of the senior officers said, pointing into the direction of a huge crane with an attached cage. "It's quite a trip: still half a mile down. And it can be quite hot there."

"Blimey! Well... let's go! We would need these attributes there with us," said Michael pointing at a large rucksack.

"All as you say," said the officer.

"Let's go then," said Michael.

"Sure hope you know what you are doing," Schumer said with a worried face. "We cannot do much when things go wrong below there. It's quite a distance, and we have only this one cage."

"Be confident. We'll wash this little pig," said Maria. "We know about this. We've been there before. We should manage." This didn't particularly put Marco and Pierce in a tranquil mood, but it at least cheered up the vice president and his surrounding staff.

A huge winch was turned around, and Maria and Michael entered the spacious steel cage. They received gas masks, and without any ado they were lowered down into the abyss. There was a communication line, and when they hit the ground after a lengthy descent, Michael informed the party above, through the intercom, that they had safely landed. The underground cave was lit by a blueish light, and they noticed the air was quite clean, so there was no need to put on the gas masks. The temperature was even bearable, although the ground was fairly hot. At this location the strange waving of the gravitational field was somewhat noticeable and the two explorers felt some dizziness, but Maria and Michael had sea legs, and they kept in good balance taking support from each other. Looking around they discerned a large round stone on the floor more than two meters in diameter. It resembled a mill stone, with a large hole in the middle, and it was filled with some liquid that appeared initially as mercury. There were also engravings on the stone.

"That must be the ancient Omphalos stone," said Maria.

“The *Navel of the World*,” Michael added.

“Looks more like a well to me, and it is much larger than the myth recounts.”

“The one in the Adyton was only a copy. This is the *real* Omphalos. It has always been here, since ancient times,” said Michael.

“How do you know?”

“Simple deduction, Maria. We’ll have to search for Him down there, among the offerings the ancients dropped in this well.”

He pointed towards the pool of mercury. They both stooped their heads above the pool, and looking down the liquid appeared as clear water. Down on the bottom, a meter or so deep, a blue light could be seen. Also there was the shape of a huge golden ring glistening down in the water, and Michael could make out the familiar shape of his old ring, but now considerably grown in size.

“You *do* know what to do, don’t you?” asked Maria with a very worried expression.

“The only thing I can do now is to trust my intuition,” said Michael.

“You mean to say that the destiny of the whole planet is now in the hands of your *intuition*?” asked Maria.

“It has happened before: on at least three reported occasions the intuition of some individuals has saved the World from annihilation,” said Michael.

Maria grinned impishly. “And one *unreported* occasion.”

“Ah, yes, of course, almost forgot,” Michael nodded. “Well, here it is. Do you remember the epistle we read in the papers of Sigismund Backstrom about ‘*Phobos ende Python*?’”

“His translation into Dutch of J. B. Porta? Yes.”

Michael murmured: ‘*Let us take from this place the Great Serpent Python, that is so terrible of sight, with shimmering shells and great malice, with multiple rays surrounded and protected. The strongest and most valiant of all that Mother Earth brings forth, and helped greatly by the convenience of the place, so that it all depends on that. This Serpent, through the force of the corrupted air, more venomous than the Adder, gives terrible whips of far, as it has devoured its enemy. So let us*

drop it in a dark Abyss, full of silence, so that it will not kill from the rising fumes and through the issue of his deathly breath those who stand around.'

"Gosh, you *have* prepared yourself, it seems! So... what will you use as your *weapon*?" Maria opened the ruck sack. There were the items they had taken. Michael pondered on the situation. Apollo and Pytho were adversaries. Apollo's weapon was clearly the Lyre, but against Pytho Cybele had used the sistrum in ancient times. Five years earlier Maria had wielded it to fence off the same creature.

"Nothing else to do than pick up the challenge," said Michael, and before Maria could say anything Michael stooped over the well with the rucksack on his back and the sistrum in his right hand. Michael was shortly pondering what to do, when the gravitational field got a real hold of him, and he was pulled forcibly into the well. He had taken a deep breath and decided to give in. Michael had the feeling of plunging into water, but then soon the well appeared much deeper and the water pressed against his chest forcefully as he went down with the weighty rucksack. At least the water was pleasantly warm and he was an experienced swimmer. The Ring appeared equally distant all the time, and the deeper he went the more it was receding before him. He energetically swam downwards. Still, he was unable to reach the bottom, which at first had seemed so nearby. '*Of course,*' Michael thought, '*I should have known!*' Just before deciding to swim back up, however, he noticed the Ring had unfolded into the form of a serpent of ever increasing dimensions. It suddenly made a pass at him and presently it encircled him. Its large body slid around Michael's waist and it started to squeeze. Michael struck it with the sistrum. It gave off an electrical impulse, and it was strong enough for the creature to suddenly loosen its grip. Michael feared he would soon be out of air and being not quite certain of the direction, he swam briskly in the direction of a light at the end of the tunnel further down the well. Pytho was still pursuing him, and he could only go forward. Then he suddenly realized he was moving faster and he emerged out of the water and he could breathe again.

The next thing he observed was the confined space of a round well, and looking upwards he perceived a blue summer sky. He crept out of the water and stepped up a series of small circular steps leading out of the well, still clasping on to the Sistrum, the instrument that had now clearly saved him from peril. He was not sure where he was, but once he reached the top of the well and looked around he recognised the surroundings: he was in the courtyard of the *Monastery of the Anchorites*. He had a strong feeling of having been at this spot before. He embarked on a little walk along the *Trail* that lead to the *Library of the Brotherhood*, still carrying the rucksack on his back, and holding the Sistrum in his right hand. He had an inkling that they all might be waiting for him on their *Annual Meeting*. In passing he saw a small gathering of country folk standing around a newly placed grave stone. They were discussing about the words engraved on the stone by their *Architect*.

One of the *Shepherds* said: ‘*Of course Endymion has been here! This sentence is not complete! Let Hiram keep his word and finish His work.*’

Stepping nearer, Michael asked: “Is your leader gone?”

One of the country girls, who he recognised as Irene, turned to him with a sad face and said: ‘*Yes, He left last week, and our Architect has promised to make an appropriate memorial for Him. We only asked Him that it should be made so that people will remember our Reconciler, remember Him for all time. Now, I keep wondering at the meaning of this inscription. What does the Elder say of this?*

“Oh, but it is very clear,” said Michael “Our Architect only means to say: *He was also one of us*”, but his control of Latin is somewhat rusty, I guess.”

‘*It is a sad time for all of us country folk,*” said another of the Shepherds, who Michael knew as Hyksos. *Hiram is dismayed. Much He had to put up with Mankind, and now the Anchorites and the Sibyls are rising in protest. He is thinking of leaving us!*’

“Mankind is *my* concern, not His. Where is Hiram now?” asked Michael, getting a little worried.

Nobody knows. The Elder are now in conclave. Why aren't you there?" Irene asked.

"I'll go there now," he replied. "I must have missed the invitation."

Michael walked away from the group of Shepherds, and turned towards the Library. This was a large edifice drawn up from mahogany and it resided on a large green. There were white Ibises parading in the garden. When he arrived there, he already observed through one of the large square windows that a meeting of the *Brotherhood* was in session. Clearly visible was an oval table with eleven heads sitting around it.

Michael stepped inside through the open door. At the head of the table, their chairman, Seth, the old sage, was seated. *Where on earth have you been? We are in a major predicament here!*" he complained.

"I must have missed the announcement," said Michael. "Sorry for that... I heard Endymion has passed away. What happened?"

'*Pytho got him,*' said Marcus of Syracuse. '*We will not see him again.*'

'*Not a small setback for our little community!*' John the Elder added.

"Why a set-back?" asked Michael.

The Anchorites of the Monastery have risen against the Sibyls of the Sphere," said Seth, '*and Endymion was the only negotiator that both camps trusted. Now, with Pytho awake, our Realm is at stake!*'

"Ah, so I heard," Michael nodded. Still he couldn't quite remember where he had heard it.

'*So, we are in conclave as what to do. Our Architect has, logically, chosen the camp of the Anchorites, and we have been visiting the other side more than once. The Sibyls are not in a position to help, I'm afraid,*' Seth continued.

"Not even his Mother?" asked Michael.

'*No, logically She takes the side of the Sibyls. Sophia is in the Sphere now.*' said John. '*Would you have expected otherwise?*'

"Ah... No... of course not." said Michael.

'*As you are the more vigilant member of our lot, I propose that you plead with Hiram. He threatened to leave us. You should remember Him of His duties as our Architect, and convince Him to stay on and face his responsibilities, particularly that he calms Pytho and then settles the disputes here, otherwise a final separation of the*

Sphere from the Monastery will occur,’ said John the Elder.

“Where would Hiram be now?” Michael asked.

I saw him heading for the Auditorium Hall of the Monastery,’ said Peter. ‘A meeting with the Anchorites, no doubt.’

There was a short silence, all members of the Brotherhood looking at Michael in grave expectation.

‘*Why! You’re all wet and dirty,*’ said Lukas, the youngest member of the circle.

“Yes, I’ve been in the well, looking for my *Emblem*,” said Michael.

‘*Oh! You’d better find that one. It was a precious gift from Sophia, and without it Hiram will not be inclined to listen to you,*’ said Seth.

‘*And what is that Sistrum doing in your hands?*’ said Marcus of Syracuse. ‘*I have not seen you with it before. Have you changed instruments?*’

Michael looked at his Sistrum. “Ah! I found it in the Well. I had to dive quite deep. Cybele must have lost it there,” he said.

‘*She has left long ago,*’ said Seth.

“I found quite a lot more there,” said Michael. He put the Sistrum on the table and took down his rucksack. He started to empty it slowly. First he produced the silver Lyre.

‘*Is that not Apollo’s Lyre?*’ asked Markus of Syracuse.

“So it seems to be,” said Michael. “It surely needs a new player.”

‘*It still looks magnificent.*’ said Markus. ‘*Better than the one I lent you. So... you have you been practicing?*’

“Oh, yes! I’ve been quite busy with the Lyre, actually.” said Michael.

‘*Maybe you can play for Hiram,*’ said Seth. ‘*If you can console Him, he might be inclined to change His set of mind.*’

‘*What other stuff are you carrying around in that bag?*’ asked Lukas, who still had the inquisitiveness of youth.

Michael then produced the Flute. “Look here! Besides the Sistrum of Cybele it seems the Flute of her sister Mnemosyne was in the Well too, and more items I’ve found there, unknown to me. I thought of returning them to you, such as this book.” He next produced the heavy volume with silver pages and golden rings.

'Ah! The book of the Egyptians!' Seth beamed. 'It belongs here in the library. How on Earth did it get in the Well?'

"Maybe dropped by a careless reader?" said Michael. "What is this book about?"

"It's a description of the Garden of Eden," said Seth.

"Oh, well, that book I certainly would like to read some day," said Michael.

"We ALL would like that!" said John the Elder.

The next object he unveiled from the bag was a silver Ibis.

'That statue belongs to the Sphere!' said John the elder.

"Yes," said Michael, "there are two of them." He then unpacked the other one.

'Better leave them here,' said Seth. *'I can take them back on my next visit... that is... when our disputes are settled.'*

Michael next took out the two mirrors. "To whom do these belong?" he asked.

'The Sibyls, of course,' said John the Elder. *'One of them was given to Hiram when he got betrothed to Mnemosyne.'*

"All lying around on the bottom of the Well," said Michael. "People have become so careless here! Can you imagine what would have happened if these instruments had sunken deeper and passed into the lower realms?"

'Hmm... Mnemosyne went looking them one day,' said Seth. *'She never returned. It has weighed heavily on Hiram. He was never the same. You should go and plead with him. We badly need His help against Pytho.'*

"So... Off you go!" John the Elder ordained, with his well-known, impish smile.

Michael took the Lyre and questioningly also took up one of the mirrors and the sistrum. All the members of the Brotherhood nodded appreciatively.

'Don't forget your Robe, dear Michael!' said John the Elder. Michael looked at his empty chair, his blue robe hanging over the back rest. He took it, and then he started walking back to the Monastery. On the way

he donned his robe, and when he passed the *Memorial Stone* again, the Shepherds had all gone. He read the inscription a bit closer by, walked back, and pondered on the text. At this point he clearly understood it in the form of an anagram, which referred to the *Unspeakable Secret*, which all in this realm had to keep. Also Endymion had been a keeper of it, so the inscription made a lot of sense to Michael. Soon, he passed the Well again, and turned slightly left towards the *Great Auditorium*, which was used for *General Assemblies*. It was a large circular hall with many white marble columns supporting a blue dome adorned with all kinds of celestial and mythological figures.

'Well, well, Michael! You are long overdue...' a low voice said.

Michael then noticed Hiram, the venerable Architect, sitting on the steps on the opposite side of the auditorium. He was clad in a similar blue robe as Michael, but with an additional golden sun shining on his breast. In his right hand he held a sceptre. However, his face appeared worn-down, and his sceptre touched the ground, something that was wholly improper.

"You have waited for me long?" asked Michael.

'Since our last discussion much has changed here, and I'm in dire need of a change of setting,'

"Why, what's wrong? Was it Endymion?"

'I've, for once, entirely lost my grounds, first I lost Mnemosyne, and now Endymion is gone, my last friend and consoler.'

"Last friend? Are WE not friends?"

'You are always away! You roam the Universe and think no more of us,' Hiram mumbled.

"Me? Roaming the Universe?" said Michael. "I wish I could do that! I am not Mercurius. Why are you so suddenly taken aback by the departure of a person you hardly ever saw? Endymion never spoke of you."

'Maybe you think so,' said Hiram, *'but how would you know in your absence? Now Pytho has caught him. He will never return.'*

"Why did Pytho do that?"

'He was much with the Pythia, and the Pythia has outwitted Him in the most cunning way. I suppose it was revenge. Endymion saved the Pythia.'

Michael wasn't quite sure now what Hiram meant.

'Now I have become a prisoner of my own creations. I would rather leave this universe and start a new one,' Hiram moaned.

"Is that possible?" said Michael.

'Do you really know me?' Hiram murmured with a menacing look.

"You are our Architect. We all need you. We depend on you, as the Builder of Bridges for one."

'Cleverly phrased, Michael, but your Brotherhood has no answers to give in our new predicament. My creation has deserted me. Endymion was the last link.'

"It was not *your* creation: the Sibyls gave you the *Design*. Would it not be fair to give all another chance, so that all creations may still come to fruition? You are not the Supreme Master, merely one of the Artificers, like Pytho."

'Hah! Those reckless thoughts and fanciful ideas of the higher realms, of those splendid but feeble spirits that come in and out of existence when they choose, being everywhere and nowhere at the same time? I have to live here in my Kingdom till the end of time. How would you understand?'

"I would not let that Sceptre touch the ground like that! You still have *some* powers at your disposition."

'I'm tied up to this realm, just like Pytho,' Hiram sighed.

"Cybele gave you that sceptre with a purpose," Michael pressed.

'Indeed! But in the end there is Pytho, our common friend or foe. He was badly cheated out of his inheritance by the Pythia, and now...' he passed a lengthy sigh again.

"Ah! Pytho's inheritance," Michael mumbled, slightly uneasy now, as he tried to remember the case. "Why does Pytho hanker after lost treasures? I much wonder."

'It is the only thing left to Him. Indeed, in the end the Sibyls and even the highest and the lowest Lord will have to succumb to Him. He will contract, and we will contract with Him.'

"Only as a last resort. I propose you go and reason with Pytho."

'Maybe I can remember him of our possibilities still, but He remains in charge all the same!' He raised the sceptre upwards.

"Hmm. Have you forgotten all about Cybele, who gave you that sceptre... and for that particular purpose with Pytho..." He raised the sistrum from behind his back.

'The Sistrum!' Hiram exclaimed with a shiver in his voice. *'Where did you find it?'*

"In the Well. All those things that Mnemosyne searched for I just found back there. The water was quite low, so I could dive for it. They were all on the sandy bottom. There was also the gift you once got from Mnemosyne, your fiancée!" Michael now showed the mirror.

'The Mirror!' Hiram cried.

"You're all getting careless, squander our inheritances and covenants like Humankind below!"

'Mnemosyne, Cybele, Apollo!' said Hiram with a broken voice. *'I've missed them so!'*

"We all do. I have also lost somebody precious. The Anchorites still keep her for ransom! I ask you: How have things gone so sour in our realm? It is a shame!"

'Where is the consolation I always got from Mnemosyne? She always played for me on her Flute, accompanied by Apollo on his Lyre and by Cybele with her Sistrum. Now I lost Endymion. He was a great singer, you know,' Hiram moaned.

Michael then lifted up the Lyre. "I can play for you... if you want."

'Sing me a Song, Michael, the Song of Barbelo, of her Capture and of her Liberation... or of Theseus and Ariadne, because my Memory is faint,' Hiram sniffled.

Michael took the Lyre and settled for the *Song of the Sylphides*. He just had learned it from Marcus of Syracuse, one of the younger members of the Brotherhood. It touched on the same subject of imprisonment. He started with a long introduction, a succession of chords in the Dorian key on which the melody of the song was strung up. The sounds of the Lyre were soft and he knew he had a gallant voice. He

then sung about the Sylphides in the slow fashion it required. It was the most consoling song he knew, telling of the airy race of the Sylphides in the woods. One of them was captured by Orion the Huntsman, and the song related mainly to the attempts, by various tricks, to release the unhappy Sylphide from Orion's claws.

When he came to the end, he saw Hiram was greatly moved. *I can never play and sing like that. Will you not stay on and be my consoler?* he asked.

"I cannot," said Michael. "Everybody has his Mission. Mine is to mediate between the Technocrats and the Theocrats below. Yours is to mediate between the Anchorites and the Sibyls and work as their Architect, the Builder of Realms and the Builder of Bridges between them. Those were the tasks ordained by our great Creator, the Supreme Master. To this he gave us his Covenant."

'So, you try to console me by remembering me of my Duties and my Fate?' Hiram asked wearily.

"So it is with all of us here in this domain. Maybe in the lower realms they may think they are free of will, but here we realise that the freedom we have is to make do with our Fate. But everybody can learn new things; you can learn to play and sing."

'You really think so? Can you teach me?' asked Hiram.

"It is an easy matter with the right teacher," said Michael, "but I think young Marcus of Syracuse is the better one. I can leave you this instrument. It is Apollo's Lyre; keep it well. The flute of Mnemosyne is still with Seth in the Library, but I think worthy players will be found from the ranks of the Sibyls. So, there is no need for sulkiness."

Hiram took the instrument and inspected it on all sides. *'It surely looks fair,'* he said. *'This young Marcus of Syracuse also strikes me as a decent chap. Will he have patience to teach me? I wonder.'*

"He surely has patience. So, now that you have the Sistrum back and the Mirror and the Lyre, I suppose you can handle Pytho with ease."

Hiram gave a gentle smile, when Michael next handed him also the long lost Mirror. Hiram now had his hands full of instruments. He was at the point of leaving when some wrinkles appeared on his brow:

Where is your Emblem?" he said.

"Hmm... I was diving for it when I found these lost treasures."

Well, it seems you are getting careless too. The Pot calls the Kettle black! Hah! You should instantly retrieve your Emblem. Not everybody knows you in this realm. Someone may throw you back in the Slough if you're not careful!"

"I will find it back shortly," said Michael.

Good! Thanks for your consolation and your advice!" said Hiram. Then he disappeared through the row of marble columns into the sunlight, with all his instruments.

Michael got an uneasy feeling: he was there now standing all of a sudden without anything. His Emblem gone, in his blue robe, with wet clothes underneath, he stood for a while in the sunlight looking towards the Sphere. Sophia had now taken refuge there, and he thought of going to see her, but then he was remembered of the significance of his Emblem. Without it he would likely not be granted permission to so high realms. Some of the new guardians might not recognise him, and thus he would need it more than ever in these unruly times.

He walked back the short path leading to the Well. When he came to the edge he looked down. There was still much less water than usual and he promptly embarked on his way down. The circular steps made it easy to descend down into the Well, and when he got to the water he was aware that time was running out. The sun had started its descent, and light would be much dimmer if he further delayed. He took a deep breath and dived down. The water felt warm and he went down a few meters. For a while he rummaged the sandy bottom, and it was not long before he found his Emblem. He grabbed it firmly and was at the point of returning to the surface when he suddenly became aware that his robe was stuck to a large, rusty pin. He was almost out of air and would need to release himself quite soon if he was not to drown. Unfortunately, the robe was made of sturdy material, and it was quite strongly entangled. A struggle ensued and Michael managed to shed his robe just before passing out. Then he felt being drawn down towards the bottom of the Well: somebody was pulling at his sandals. *Pytho! I'm*

done in!" he panicked.

The next moment he was lying on a hot floor coughing up water. A terrible agony was upon him, and he recognised the anxious face of Maria. He had a burning feeling in his lungs and he coughed again. After a short while, however, he could get some air in his lungs.

"Michael. What the hell were you doing down there? You nearly drowned!" Maria shouted at him.

He tried to answer, but there was still water in his lungs and he kept coughing forcefully. It took him a moment to get all the water out and his voice back.

"I'm fine!" he said. "Thanks for saving me!"

"Did you find anything?" said Maria.

"What did I do? What did you see?" Michael nervously asked.

"Well, you all of a sudden dived into the well, but you didn't get very far. When you stopped moving, I just pulled you out!"

"But I was there for more than an hour!" said Michael. "Incredible! All those years, I remembered only small fragments! Now it all came back! Everything!"

"What came back?!"

"My memory: I was *there!* Many, many, many times!"

"Hmm... Welcome back," Maria sighed.

"But it *WAS* real!" said Michael.

"Welcome back anyway," said Maria. "Where is your bag with all the instruments?"

"Left it all... with *them!*" Michael looked at his right hand. In it he held clamped a large golden coin. "My Emblem! I found it!"

"You mean from over *there*!? Hardly possible to take souvenirs," Maria said, looking with awe at the medal Michael put before her.

"You told me that story of being in that other realm, in whatever-they-call-it. I really was unable to believe it... I'm very sorry... but *now* I believe!"

Maria put her hand on Michael's lips. "We don't need to speak about it. It's OK, Michael. Only tell me: did you encounter Pytho?"

“Yes, He was in the well... on my way down... or was it up?... but he wasn’t there on my way back. Maybe *that* explains it!”

“Explains what?”

“That I now remember everything. Maybe Hiram was already taking care of Him. That’s why Pytho wasn’t there on the way back.”

“Hiram?”

“Hiram, he is our Architect.”

“Hmm... I think I know Him under another name!”

“Oh!” said Michael. Both sitting on the hot floor, he embraced Maria and rested his head on her shoulder. He was at the end of his tether. They were silently resting in embrace for a while.

“So, what are we to do now?” asked Maria.

“Let’s see!” said Michael.

He took up the glass jar with the Hibiscus pods, which they had left on the edge of the Omphalos stone. Michael put the coin in the jar. After closing it they both waited in the blue light if something would happen. The coin just lay dead at the bottom.

“Let’s signal up that we are OK.” said Maria.

They took up their remaining stuff and kept their eyes fixed on the coin in the glass jar. When they were on their way back in the steel cage, they noticed that the waviness of the gravitational field had ceased. Nothing out of the ordinary happened in the jar either.

“There is no reaction,” said Maria.

“Indeed, I think we have done it!” said Michael.

When they arrived at the intermediate level, they were hailed by the crowd with enthusiastic bravos.

“How on earth did you pull all *that* off?” asked vice-president Schumer.

“Oh,” Michael beamed, “in the end it was all about putting together an ancient trio!”

“Trio? What trio?” asked Schumer.

“Chamber music, sir!” said Michael.

12. Neptune

Music has to penetrate ever deeper into domestic life. It has to work in a mobilizing and unifying way. The concert public is put together from the most diverse elements and such has a disturbing influence. I love above all intimate chamber music, and I believe that its time is not over. On the contrary: it has to find new forms and change to become a force that reforms our modern connected Life. Social life as it nowadays presents itself cannot last much longer. The Home has to pass again onto its higher level, and there music can do miracles. The Home has to be above everything else; only then people can be strong and happy. I have written a lot of chamber music and I want to concentrate on that even more.

Jean Sibelius (1915)

WORK on the *Ondine* had been slow during the autumn and winter, and as the housing in Glasgow was getting forbiddingly expensive at the time, the schooner provided accommodation in the docks at Ayr to our family for a longer time than initially anticipated. However, the time finally arrived to re-baptize the *Emily* back to *Ondine* and take her out to sea to her new home base. The plan was to sail the little stretch from the Griffin docks to Glasgow. More than half a year of refurbishment and constantly improvising on the vessel had taken its toll on my father and mother. For me and my sister, however, it was all a big adventure and of the historical trip to Glasgow I cherish the warmest memories. The festive occasion finally took place on the first of May 2022. Special visitors had turned up: Maria and Marco had flown over from Madeira, Richard and Dorothea had come down from the Highlands accompanied by Archie MacLachlan and his wife. Michael and Sheila travelled from the Lowlands and Gillian and Pierce from the Midlands. To top it off, Hamid and Dinah had also travelled from Turkey, and even Hamid's brother, Bandir, then still the monarch of Phrygia, had shown up. Marco had purchased many bottles of *Purple Rose* bubbly of

which one was intended for the baptizing ceremony.

Moray Fergusson had by now expanded his business, building boats on the Griffin docks with his brother Rory. He had even expelled the *bloody Mormons* from the dockyard. (I actually remember that we went visiting there a few times. We were always warmly received there and I still have one good friend from that congregation who I still see regularly.)

The Ondine was ready for launch in the dock. On the quay a large crowd was assembled and Moray spoke the first words: “*I dedicate this day to Neptune, God of the Sea! Neptune is also the God of the unconscious, the Sea of the Pleroma, so I heard from Michael here. Ondine was maybe Neptune’s counterpart, the elemental nymph, which I hope will not any longer form any curse for the new generation sailing this sturdy vessel. All made of solid Dutch Oak, it has stood the tides of many oceans, seen the rule of many captains, and had at times quite rare cargo. Thus, I wish Jeremy Willmore and his family all the best on the coming travels. Of course if any repairs are needed, I hope he will visit me and Rory here to attend to the matter.*”

Next turn was for Sheila who would swing the bottle of red bubbly, suspended from the harbour crane with a long rope, towards the renewed vessel. She stepped onto a small pedestal and took up the bottle-on-a-string. “*Hereby I christen thee back to thy original name, Ondine! Mayest thou sail safely in the post-modern Age, and keepeth your family safe!*” she proclaimed. The bottle swung towards the hull and struck just below the new name plate. It made a large red stain on the neatly varnished light brown oak panelling, but the stain soon dripped away.

All the guests embarked the vessel, eager for warm refreshments at the start of the small voyage to Glasgow, because the steady, chilly gale from the North had been a nasty a surprise. Cake and hot coffee was served, but Gerald and Michael were on deck getting the new Bermuda rigging prepared. My father was behind the rudder wheel and started the new, silent diesel engine. However, the cold wind was from an unfavourable direction, so the short trip was in the end made entirely on expensive diesel fuel. My father remained at the rudder on top of

the deck, but below in the saloon all the guests were chatting and having coffee and cake. Marco already started to prepare evening dinner, which was planned for after the arrival. It was going to be '*Chili con Carne*', but this was an understatement, because Pierce had sneakily poured a half bottle of expensive red wine in it. It was during coffee that Archie and Bandir interviewed each other about the new EU legislation for refugees, and Hamid and Richard hobnobbed about the present state of the Oxford colleges, if I now remember correctly.

It was then that Hamid broke the sad news to everyone: "Listen all, please... We have to inform you that, unfortunately, our mutual acquaintance, the former Superintendent Benjamin Miller of Scotland Yard passed away last week. His heart was slowly getting weaker, and in the end they had to let him go. My good old friend Marc Eddowes brought me the news promptly, and now you also know."

"Poor old Benji!" Maria sighed, but it was also with a slight glance of relieve.

"Well, it was to be expected. He was already over 80 years old," said Pierce. "So, now all the pieces of the puzzle have shuffled in place, and we may open a bottle of *Purple Rose*!"

"I also would like to express my deep regret that we have not been able to bestow any worldly justice on Kenny Tielock," Hamid continued. "It seems the earth has swallowed him up. I can say that all the treasures of the syndicate have now been retrieved, and they have found their way back without any media spectacle to the respective countries from which they were fraudulently obtained. So, for that part we are very lucky, and a spokesman of Interpol told me that they would likely put yet one billionaire behind bars."

When the coffee and cake was going down and Marco was still stirring the huge casserole, Pierce made use of a sudden pause in the conversation. He posed himself on the steps of the exit, well visible:

"It's an Ancient Mariner, and he stoppeth one of three.

By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,

now wherefore stopp'st thou me?..."

It was my first vivid memory of a rare cultural event, the first part being Pierce reciting the complete *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* of Samuel Taylor Coleridge before all the guests. He did need half a bottle of red bubbly to get started (so my grandmother told me later that day!) but his control of the poem was impressive. Michael and Gerald also came down to listen, and in the end there was a long, standing ovation. The short passage to Glasgow was not without surprises, because Michael took up his guitar and played to Hamid a composition from the Phrygian Royal Archives, in the Phrygian scale, while even singing a song in Paleo-Phrygian. Of course nobody understood what it was all about, but Hamid explained the plot of the song later.

What I further remember of the trip was that they all started to tell jokes. In the beginning Archie MacLachlan pulled off many off his old sketches. The one that stayed with me was in the context of the success of president Sanders' reformed Medicare bill in the United States (and actually borrowed from Dick Cavett!) about a woman who had to give birth in a taxi, because after paying the taxi bill she had no money left for the hospital.

At a certain point Hamid asked my grandfather: "Hey Michael, when I read this thesis of your father-in-law, he refers to some joke of a club of retired scientists who witnessed a traffic accident on a newly designed traffic square, getting into some kind of dispute. However, he only refers to it and doesn't tell the story in much detail. Do you know how it went?"

"Yes, it is actually a joke that Pierce heard at high school," said Michael. "Do you still remember that one, Pierce? I must have told it to John many years ago, but I don't seem to remember it now."

This was the next opportunity for Pierce to shine: "Well, it was my mathematics teacher who invented it, and he was known as a very witty person, who spiced his lessons with jokes and real anecdotes to increase his pupils' interest in mathematics. Indeed it was about a small group of retired scientists, all quite merited, but who were already getting a bit rusty in the head. It was about this traffic square where frequently

accidents happened, and nobody actually knew why. Nearly every day there was a smaller or larger collision. The main problem was that the traffic square was a crossing of five roads, and for some reason the cars had difficulty avoiding each other, despite the traffic lights. So, the municipal authorities had contracted these four scientists, all of different science disciplines, to design the *perfect* traffic square. They were quite willing to spend a million extra to get it all quite right with the help of a mathematician, a physicist, a chemist and a psychologist, whom they contracted from the local university. However, their cooperation was not ideal. During the design and the realisation they were always in each other's hairs about one detail or another, you can imagine. In the end, however, the traffic square for the five roads was realised. It was then a few years later that the four scientists met by appointment on that square, and took place on a public bench in the park besides the busy spot, where they silently observed the traffic rushing along. The mathematician said to the others with a note of pride: '*You see all goes well. It's due to the design. MATHEMATICS is all we need!*' They couldn't say much to that. Not a long time passed when they suddenly heard and saw to their astonishment two cars crashing into each other with substantial speed. It looked all very serious, and the three other scientists looked with scorn at the mathematician. '*You were wrong! The mathematics didn't help in the least!*' said the physicist. '*It is not the mathematics, it's the PHYSICS that went wrong here,*' yelled the mathematician. '*What an absolutely idiotic thing to say!*' the physicist screamed back, '*It is the design that was wrong, you can't blame the physics, the physics just happens!*' '*Just a moment!*' the chemist said, '*You were in the design because of the physical aspects of this. You cannot absolve yourself like that. You are also responsible.*' They were all looking cross at each other, each of course trying to evade blame for the accident. However, the accident appeared to be more serious than anticipated because one of the cars caught fire. The physicist said: '*I cannot be blamed for this, this is chemistry!*' This of course greatly upset the chemist who couldn't yet say much to that. However, the situation further advanced before their eyes into a new

phase: both drivers started to put the fire out with dry powder fire extinguishers. ‘*That’s also chemistry!*’ the chemist roared, as if he could absolve himself this way. The next phase, however, was even more serious: the two drivers started yelling at each other and then even to fight in the middle of the square, in full sight of the public in the jammed traffic. It was a bad sight. Then three scientists turned their gaze upon the psychologist, the last in line. ‘*In the end it is all the psychology that gives the pain in the ass,*’ said the chemist. ‘*Indeed!*’ the psychologist laughed. ‘*That is what you get when all these hard designers of a crossing of five roads pig-headedly keep referring to it as a traffic SQUARE!*’

I still lively remember the roaring laughter of Archie MacLachlan. With his red face and his orange bushy air waving he said to Pierce: “You have beaten me! Congratulations!”

It must be said that on that occasion the Bacchantic side of life took over and the red sparkling wine from Madeira was soon finished. My father, however, remained on deck most of the time behind the rudder wheel and I just ran up and down between the upper and lower decks. Later I remained largely with my father at the helm. So, I missed the various discussions, which might have been about the revelations of the ship’s log from which my grandfather read a few long passages. There was much going on and for me - at such a young age - all the discussions below deck were entirely ‘over my head’. I assisted my father all the way to the James Watt dockyard in Port Glasgow.

However, I do remember clearly that when we were all gathered in the saloon again to say goodbye to each other, Richard proclaimed to move back to the US, giving as the main reason the enduring poverty and political developments in England proper, despite the better prospects in his own country, Scotland. He said: ‘*In England proper the Tories have become ideologically intolerant, and the Labour party has shed its liberal coat and its willingness for reform. Now they both are moving in the same direction the US was 20 years back: towards an impoverished totalitarian state that is increasingly zealous, ruthless and anti-democratic. That’s what’s in store of England.*’

Archie MacLachlan could only nod, and he mumbled that still much had to be done, even in Scotland. It was then that Michael rose and addressed Richard: “We are not happy to see you leave, Dicky, but we saw it coming. You have obviously still many ties at the other side of the Atlantic, and they must have grown gradually stronger by the dissolution process in Europe. Although we are confident, with Archie here, that we will also mend our ways here, we all wish you luck in your pension years in the States.” Then he took up a long wooden box. “You gave us something back last summer that helped us to locate Maria, and we are greatly indebted to you because of this and the further hints you supplied. So, now there only remains one thing for us: to hand over to you something you have been looking for very ardently in your earlier years: The sword of Richard Cameron!” With this, he handed over the box to Richard, who was struck by the unanticipated generosity.

“You must be kidding!” he said.

“Oh, no, Richard! It is genuine all right. After restoring it with great care, the Museum was suddenly much more interested in taking it up in their collection, but I had to turn their offer down, when I heard you had actually been looking for it on the moors. Sheila’s father found it first, but he hid it on the attic. I think he couldn’t keep it lawfully on the wall of the living room. Maybe he knew you would come one day to claim it.”

“Well, I don’t know what to say!” Dicky sighed. He opened the box and drew out the sword. It was quite a sight: all the rust had been removed and it glittered in the saloon, almost blinding the audience. Then Richard read the Latin phrase that was written on it:

“*Jussa fortiter meum est*”

In the end, Richard was proven wrong by history, likely because his concerns and the motto of the sword reached Archie’s ears, and he was not a man to decline a challenge.

13.

Academic Interludium IV

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7. Conclusions



WITHOUT the very substantial help of the brothers of the Maleme monastery this thesis might never have been written. It is the main rule of a brotherhood to adhere to each other in spirit and bring about enlightenment. The strange paradox about enlightenment is that it can never flourish well in an environment of utter seclusion, as is the case with our order and the present student. As the outer pressures are manifold and intensifying, the imperative to spiritual renewal should always be obeyed and with it comes the inevitable point of departure to new shores.

One of the main rules in life is to try to simplify complex problems. As this is not always obeyed in the sphere of politics, it is a great rule in science, known as *Occam's Razor*. However, one should also be aware of not inadvertently falling in oversimplification of riddles that have been raising questions age after age, and it seems we are still not much closer to any good understanding of the many complexities of the marvel of Life. Presently, we have not come further than a *notion* of evolution. On the molecular scale, Life appears more homogeneous, even uniting plants and animal life, but despite this unity there remains complexity also on that level. If the precepts of this thesis prove right, even at the lowest level (of the strings?) we may assume inherent complexity. Energy is not distributed randomly, but may have an inner '*structural chaos*' that is the direct result of the complex number nature of quantised energy. Brian Josephson was one of the first to realise that biological systems may be able to utilise this '*numinous*' quantum chaos, i.e. within quantum processes inside the

neuronal apparatus the mental aspect of Life might be a emergent property of this hidden order within chaos. This supports the notion of a new level of hidden variables: that of the structure of energy distributions when they act on themselves. Much more we cannot propose in this thesis other than to discuss how such a finding will partially answer the primary questions of the mind/body controversy.

First, how ‘non-physical’ mental processes can affect physical processes without violating the rules of causality: they likely don’t! The mental processes are causal, and although they give rise to a plurality of choices in the mind, we can never prove if in the real world the choices we make *are* non-causal. If even in the lowest level processes seem to flow directly from two given complex numbers, the theory of ‘*super-determinacy*’ proposed by J. S. Bell seems to hold more ground then Everett’s ‘*many-worlds*’ supposition.

Secondly, how are we to understand the mental phenomena of Creativity, Meaning, Will and Intelligence as neural processes: likewise they are preordained by the plenum and the implicate order in a deterministic way, but in a different fashion as earlier assumed. As the complexity of the factors acting in the deterministic outcome is too large to comprehend, it might be better to understand mental processes as emergent from these lowest scale forms.

Thirdly, how neural processes give rise to conscious experiences and create a ‘*virtual reality*’: there basically is no distinction! There is only one reality and our dreams and fantasies are part of this reality.

Fourth, how is the human mind related to that of ‘God’: the mind of God is likely equal to or an aspect of the collective mind, just as everything is part of the implicate order. We may, however, presuppose that He was able to choose the principal numbers and set all in motion, the deeper meaning of the *logos*.

As with all the primeval serpents, Echidna was capable of twisting in various knots, and as she took the shape of the ellipsis, and biting her own tail, she was said to be most powerful. From here the sign of infinity was derived. Still we forget here that the serpent was a symbol of fertility and secret knowledge. It is not surprising that when the myths deal with serpents we are actually discussing the generative powers of the elemental strings, which are called hyper-meta-proto elemental matter in Besant's treatise on Occult Chemistry. The Bohmian interpretation of quantum mechanics already introduced a very similar and radical metaphysical view of nature. It goes far beyond the concepts of non-locality and entanglement: it offers a comprehensive interpretation of quantum systems in which the holistic nature of the world is confirmed (the *holomovement*), as Bohm already expounded in his first treatise on Quantum mechanics (in 1951):

"The fact that quantum systems cannot be regarded as made up of separate parts working together according to causal laws means that we are now led to a fundamental change in our general methods of description of nature. Only in the classical limit, where the effects of individual quanta are negligible and where their combined effects can be approximated by a causal description, is it possible to separate [analyse] the world into distinct parts. Even in the classical limit, we recognise that the separation between object and environment is an abstraction. But because each part interacts with the others according to causal laws, we can still give a correct description in this way. In a system whose behaviour depends critically on the transfer of a few quanta, however, the separation of the world into parts is a non-permissible abstraction because the very nature of the parts (for instance wave or particle) depends on factors that cannot be ascribed uniquely to either part, and are not even subject to complete control or prediction. ... The entire universe must, on a very accurate level, be regarded as a single indivisible unit in which separate parts appear as idealizations permissible only on a classical level of accuracy of description." p. 167 of <³⁴>

The ominous nature of quantum mechanics keeps still many scholars awake at night, because according to Bohm the underlying behaviour of matter is not mechanical. He rather called quantum mechanics a '*theory of non-mechanics*'. Still, I would like to use the word *causal* as to imply the intricate connections between spatially separated objects as an extension to the common concept of temporal causality. After all, as general relativity has proved, it would be illogical to regard temporal causality separate from spatial causality, as time is just another dimension. It is probably by this phenomenon alone that we can even have such mental attributes as Perception, Memory, Will, Creativity, Intelligence and - last but not least - Love. Complacency and hatred can thus be regarded as the result of a *wrong view of the nature of things*, according to which we can disturb (or 'correct') one part of the world without having any influence on distant parts of the world⁷. Thus, as earlier discussed, through Herbert Spencer's re-evaluation in the context of the holistic world view, we see that advances in science have not eliminated metaphysical questions but have rather amplified them. They have given rise to developments that are fairly pseudo-scientific, as evidenced by the many *New Age* movements. Looking at it from this point it is gratifying to discern a new positive current seeking its way in '*post-modern*' thought and science, in which the idiosyncrasies of these dubious movements have been more or less neutralised, and in

⁷ In its most absurd form this is seen in the doctrine of *Mutually Assured Destruction* (MAD), in which the leaders of the largest countries of the world keep nuclear missiles in continuous readiness to 'retaliate' any nuclear attack by the other party holding on to the wrong belief that a limited nuclear exchange without retaliation would leave the own camp without harm. They don't reckon with the slow destruction that would follow through increased radiation levels and nuclear winter in their own location and - more significantly - the moral and psychological doom of their country after this one-sided attack. That the theories of David Bohm had direct consequences for his own political orientation was no surprise!

which a process of purification of the salient ideas is presently taking place. Some have even retraced their steps back to before the Cartesian revolution towards what they call ‘neo-pre-modernism’. Of this trend two recent publications stand out: the monograph by Steven Toulmin “*The Return to Cosmology: Post-modern Science and the Theology of Nature*”^{<59>} and some writings collected by the progressive theologian David Ray Griffin under the conspicuous title “*The re-enchantment of Science. Postmodern Proposals.*”^{<60>} The gist of these writings was to retrace the spiritual element in our existence that the modern scientific method and its strict dogmatism had almost eradicated. The wake-up call to this, however, was pretty much given already by Pierre Teilhard de Jardin in his 1947 monograph *The phenomenon of Man*^{<61>}:

“The difficulties we still encounter in trying to hold together spirit and matter in a reasonable perspective are nowhere more harshly revealed. Nowhere either is the need more urgent of building a bridge between the two banks of our existence - the physical and the moral - if we wish the material and spiritual sides of our activities to be mutually enlivened. To connect the two energies, of the body and the soul, in a coherent manner, science has provisionally decided to ignore the question, and it would be very convenient for us to do the same. Unfortunately, or fortunately, caught up as we are here in the logic of a system where the within of things has just as much or even more value than their without, we collide with the difficulty head on. It is impossible to avoid the dash: we must advance.”^{<59>}

Forty years later, in *The re-enchantment of Science*, David Griffin puts the matter more sharply:

“The ironic conclusion is that modern science, in its disenchanting nature, began a trajectory that ended by disenchanting science itself. If all human life is meaningless, then science, as one of its activities, must share in its meaninglessness. For some time, many held that science at least gives us the truth, even if [it is] a bleak one. Much recent thought, however, has concluded that science even does not give us that.”

He points out that the ripening fruit of the countermovement growing out of this state of disenchantment lies in four contentious issues: (1) that there is a growing conviction that science is not an enterprise free of value and human bias (it is by now even an economically and politically controlled endeavour), (2) that some of the assumptions of the *origins* of modern science have been wrong: it is much more indebted to the esoteric traditions than earlier presumed, (3) that the move away from the reductionist world-view is prompted by more recent developments in science (e.g. cosmology and quantum/string theory), and (4) that the mechanistic, non-animistic view of nature introduces a paradox to the mind-body problem. A re-enchantment of science is proposed much along the lines of thought of Alfred North Whitehead, and the theories of David Bohm and Rupert Sheldrake, which also contributed to this collection of writings. We now try to summarise the main results of this thesis by reaching back again to the ancient Egyptians, Persians and Greeks.

The Greeks posed that everything started with Chaos, pictured as an Abyss, in which the primordial timeless spirits resided: Erebus and Nyx (darkness and night), who gave birth to Hemera and Aether (light and day), and Gaia and Tartarus (Earth and the Netherworld), and then Gaia who gave birth to Pontus and Ouranos (the Sea and the Sky). Time began by the union of Gaia and Ouranos, producing the male titans Oceanus, Coeus, Crius, Hyperion, Iapetus and Kronos. The female titans were Theia, Themis, Mnemosyne, Phoebe, Tethys and Rhea. The titans are seen as the first emanations of the bodily life forms, hence the beginning of perception. They were the exponents of these mental attributes we have linked to the implicate order of things, comprising the faculties of Perception, Memory, Will, Creativity, Intelligence and Love. All these faculties have now to a certain degree gone out of balance.

Western esoteric traditions have their roots in the Gnostic/Hermetic doctrines of ancient Egypt, and it would be necessary to re-evaluate the ancient writings in our time. Where this body of wisdom originated is not exactly known, but at least via the Hellenistic neo-Platonist, Jewish Kabbalistic and Gnostic Christian traditions various parts of this body of literature have survived and can form the basis of this effort. The documents of Democritus, which we still try to collect in one volume, show that the original teachings were likely given by direct instruction, arguably close to the time and place of the cult of Cybele. The teachings became part of the Corpus Hermeticum in Egypt in the section of the General Sermon, and these were personally taught in Hermopolis by Hermes III. The last extant scroll of Democritus provides a hint that the General Sermon could be very much like the *Kybalion*, however, this still has to be confirmed when our order retrieves the remainder of the scrolls. Although Democritus gives only second-hand information of the structure of the universe (material-mind-spirit), it seems likely to be a synthesis of Western, Indian and Chinese philosophies in his time.

The message of the quantum theory seems to be that the phenomena we observe are projections from a higher dimensional unified structure that is of an elementary mental/spiritual nature. One of its features is that it has a latent memory of things past that keep ‘guiding’ the temporal developments in this world, a feature well known to the Gnostics. The plausible image that arises from coupling of scientific theories to theosophical thought is that all mental processes issue from the molecular or atomic level, and that the emergence of conscious life takes a huge amount of iterations to mature into active agents with perception and memory. It is a long battle within the complexity of forms and shapes that makes up the breeding ground of consciousness, the chaotic

order in the proto-elemental strings. To check this major role of Strife in the attainment of the phenomenon of Life is the main occupation of the evolution scientists.

The concepts of theosophy that link religion with String Theory we can appraise by considering the significance of the Mind/Matter struggle as transformed in the present day world. This was very aptly described by Wagner in his great Ring Cycle, where the special relation between freedom and slavery is today seen to re-emerge in the form of unbridled capitalism, where people enslave themselves mentally and financially - out of free choice - to create an increasingly unstable world. The victor nations of World War II, as the rich masters, have increasingly retired into a life of leisure and over-consumption, distancing them from reality, while the 'loser' nations, seem to have learnt their lesson a bit better, despite their bondage, and have been capable of more positive development. Thus, the moment will soon dawn when the roles again will be reversed; repeating that '*badly written drama*', which Leonard Bernstein so aptly phrased in his famous lecture series on music. Truly, when the serious scholar opens the newspaper nowadays, he cannot escape from the impression that our present rulers are doing an utmost effort not wanting to know the inevitable. They rather would face a slow, painful death of their own nation than give in to the reasonable demands of the nations they have oppressed. However, this is the nature of struggle. It may leave its history in the *Annals of the Pleroma*, and through the Aeons this history will boomerang back in the new civilisations after the next Aeon. Hopefully, we will have then learned our lesson through the unconscious, ancient implicate order that retained this great demise. The thoughts that Spencer framed at the beginning of the century:

"Thus from the outset the faults of both Religion and Science have been the faults of imperfect development. Originally a mere rudiment,

each has been growing more complete; the vice of each has in all times been its incompleteness; and as they reach their final forms they come into harmony. ... Though as knowledge advances, unaccountable and seemingly supernatural facts are brought into the category of facts that are accountable or natural; yet at the same time, all accountable or natural facts are proved to be in their ultimate genesis unaccountable and supernatural. While our consciousness of Nature under one aspect constitutes Science, our consciousness of it under the other aspect constitutes Religion.”

The final verdict remains that Science, despite of its great strides forward in the times after Spencer, as for instance witnessed in Cosmology, Quantum Theory and Genetics, has remained largely in the same opposition to Religion, by trying to affirm the unknowable in terms of abstract concepts like String Theory, the latter being a mere mathematical model that cannot (yet) be studied directly by the methods of Science, and only understood by a minority. Also Spencer's mention of the audacity of the religious class - I would exclude here rather the Theosophists - that think to penetrate the secrets of power manifested through all existence, even to stand behind that power and note the conditions to its action, although it may pass as piety, it is nothing but folly. So, to the final conclusion seems in line with Spencer's conclusive question:

“May we not affirm that a sincere recognition of the truth that our own and all other existence as a mystery absolutely beyond our comprehension, contains more of true religion than all the dogmatic theology ever written?”

Although it is tempting to affirm Spencer's question, we may forward the fact that Spencer could not have foreseen the impact science has had on reforming our conception of the world, particularly with the advent of quantum mechanics. As now has been proposed by Bohm and Sheldrake there may be a large body of 'active information' around in the universe, a bit

like the ancient symbol of the Sistrum that shakes the universe and releases it from stagnation (*'the grip of Pytho'*). There may well be some kind of *feedback system* in nature, a sort of '*mirror*', that reflects reality in a form that imposes a habitual effect on the global quantum state. That our existence is dominantly controlled by all kinds of acquired habits and biorhythms is no secret, but its deeper meaning could now also be understood in this holistic world model.

Another question in science is on the brink of being untangled, namely the role of gravitational forces in the creation of matter and dimensions on very small scales. Of course this might imply that we would situate God and his realm at the smallest scales where quantum-gravity rules and of which our present physical theories are still very ambiguous. Maybe Spencer and Bohm would have been satisfied: although the space given to God is now seemingly infinitesimal, He still safely remains in his realm out of shooting range of our scientific scrutiny, and in this realm of abundant energy and radiance our mind can still wonder freely, in the broadest sense of the word. However, it is quite possible that in a not unforeseeable future Pytho's great secret will be unlocked. Maybe the practical consequences to us will be wholly destructive. Will God protest? Should we take notice of what Milton wrote in Book VIII of Paradise Lost?

"...the rest from Man or Angel the great Architect did wisely to conceal and not divulge his secrets to be scanned by them who aught rather admire; or, if they list to try Conjecture, he his fabric of the heavens hath left to their disputes, perhaps to move his laughter at their quaint opinions wide hereafter; when they come to model heaven and calculate the stars, how they will wield the mighty frame; how build, unbuild, contrive to save appearances; how gird the sphere with centric and eccentric scribbled o'er, Cycle and epicycle, orb in orb."

The human endeavour in philosophy always holds the new promise of enlightenment. However, Mead was not very certain even in his time at the end of the 19th century of the promises of Christianity^{<24>}:

The hope of the adherents of the Emperor-cult was speedily shattered; the expectation of Christendom remains in great part unfulfilled, for the nineteen centuries which have passed away have severally grown old in years of bitter strife, of internecine and most bloody wars, of persecution and intolerance in things religious which no other period in the world's known history can parallel. Will the twentieth century witness the fulfilment of this so great expectation; can it be said of the present time that 'the whole nature travailleth together waiting for the manifestation of the Sons of God'?

Clearly, the 20th century was not this time of fulfilment either, and at the end of this century it is truly uncertain if we may not be on the brink of final doom, especially if new forms of covert violence and terrorism will breed havoc and mistrust among nations. This was adequately worded by the English Historian J. M. Roberts at the end of his *World History*^{<62>}:

'... But the superpowers exist in a changing world. It is a world increasingly in danger of destabilisation. The reasons for this are manifold. Among them are the proliferation of new states in the last thirty years, the increasing unreality of the United Nations Organisation as a reflexion of the interests of great powers, the spread of nuclear capability and the increasing use of covert and terroristic means to achieve political ends. The world is horribly violent. It was pointed out that although the corpses and graves could not be counted, it was possible that as many men, women and children died from political and quasi-political violence in 1979 as in the last world war. Nor do the economic ills [corruption] which feed unrest in the underdeveloped world and keep it in ferment show any signs of getting better.'

And now, when the grip of Pytho has tightened, we see that the totalitarian mode of thought has re-emerged again in Europe, despite the great efforts to eradicate it by means of the democratic purports of the European Community. Although the European experiment first produced a good step forward towards true democracy, away from xenophobia, there is presently a shift towards an unwholesome form of elitist technocracy, which may well undermine democracy in the longer run with the advent of a *European Union*. If we rely on some of the scholars of the Frankfurt School, active before the roaring 60's and predicting some of its revolutionary societal changes, we may see in this tightening of the technocratic elements in Europe a new form of tyranny, as already firmly established in the United States: an advanced industrial society that keeps up a false notion of servitude leading to inhuman attitudes, even to wholesale killing as a patriotic act, and subversion of good government to faceless 'markets'. The leaders of such totalitarian systems will feel greatly threatened by a new rebellion⁸. It is unlikely that such rebellion will come about in the Western countries, absent some catalysing event.

What are then these *expectations of Christendom* that Mead implied? Christ came into the world with four lights. These are represented in ancient symbols as the light spirits Armozel, Eleleth, Oriel and Daveithai, discussed earlier. Now we must raise the question what the implications are for Modern Man, and stumble a little further. The psychological attributes of man in search for enlightenment are adherence to these spiritual elements: Understanding, Grace, Perception, and Prudence.

Understanding implies the right interpretation of knowledge, and whether it is knowledge of the heart or knowledge of

⁸ Herbert Marcuse called this '*the Great Refusal*', detailed in his book '*One-Dimensional Man*' (1964), although he regarded this revolution more to unfold in a gradual fashion.

the head, it should bring us back to the sensation of a meaningful existence. Thus, bringing his two mental worlds of knowledge in balance, Man engages in a constant struggle: where science takes a step forward, the knowledge of the heart will need to make room, but it will never accept a dogma of ‘meaninglessness’ - see the discussion of David Griffin above on the disenchantment of science. Where religion comes in with a new mental argument, the head will have to find new understanding, but where the head adheres to proven fact the heart will seek for new meaning. Even in Modern Times we have not been able to end the discussions about the ‘right interpretation’ of the Bible, and on the other side the ‘right interpretation’ of the scientific theories. The utterance by Richard Feynman that: *‘if you think you have grasped quantum mechanics, you have not understood it,’* does not give great confidence in science, at least for the layman, and the ever expanding complexities of Life as it is revealed to us on the molecular level, raises ever new questions on the function of this or that chemical entity. The utterance of many of the clergy that *‘interpretation of the Bible must be left with the theologians’* is an equally similar insult to our reason and human dignity. If we want a participatory mode of government, in the form of social democracy, away from all forms of totalitarianism, we cannot accept a rule by ‘experts’, because soon the pundits will take over, misusing the *‘ignorance of the masses’*. In Christ we see the example of someone who has mastered the struggle of understanding, and He sheds his light through the strong ideas presented in his Parables, and in his unfailing rally for universal love. Love of man of himself, love of your neighbour, and love for the ‘Father’. So much for Daveithai.

Perception, symbolised in Oriel, takes in our tantric figures the form of expanding circular shapes, and represents the processes of becoming conscious. Its allied aspects, conception

and memory are referring to the reformed mind where new understanding grows. (See also the expanding sphere in Figure 8.) In the figure of Christ we see His unusual perceptiveness in the way he seeks out people around him to join his quest, in the way he actively tries to explain things that are foreign to the common man about the order of things. The parable of the *Lamp under the Bushel* and the *Ten Bridesmaids* stand out particularly in the context of this '*light of perception*'.

Armozel stands on the initial level, the '*light of Grace, form and idea*'. We have discussed about this already earlier that the primary *Platonic forms* and the possible physiognomy of the *elemental strings* have a likely role in this, which is the *First Cause*, in the hands of our Father, the Creator.

Eleleth, the '*light of perfection, peace, and wisdom*', is on the last emergent level: after the understanding we will attain this level where a state of perfection has been attained. The main attribute is *Prudence*, a characteristic of all who have obtained Wisdom. Basically, all these four steps have been pictured earlier by the alchemists and the Rosicrucians as the Great Work. In Christ we see His perfection in the ability to perform 'miracles'. That they were seen as miracles in His time shows the great mastery He obtained in the Spiritual Sciences, allegedly through his studies in the East.

In Conclusion, the three Powers (Will, Thought, and Life) and the four lights (Understanding, Grace, Perception, and Prudence) thus confirm the three-tiered universe as presented in the earlier chapters.

We are, however, not quite done, as there are yet some miscellanies remaining to be covered. There is more to be said about the Theosophist's stance that '*we may find our profit in comparing this boasted modern science with ancient ignorance*'. As we are in a struggle against ignorance, we could take home a few new ideas.

Firstly, the crown stones we need to construct our bridge from Science to Religion are three in number (seen as the diamonds in Figure 6). An understanding of String Theory may prove critical to the bridge construction, as we are here already close to a mathematical description of the First Cause. Describing "God" in mathematical terms is attractive, but it should not lead to a development whereby mathematicians would become the new gods in this world. The other stones are equally important: in Bohm's holistic view, we could rather say that God exists more in the sense that we are enfolded in Him and He is enfolded in us. However, God is conceptually far removed from us, and producing data (such as that produced in Figure 10) would be an unfathomable task, when considering the huge history of the Universe.

Secondly, any sincere and wise person who adheres to the knowledge of the heart in equal measure as to the knowledge of the head, the true mission of God will not easily be missed: His ability to conquer chaos and create order in the universe leads logically to the creation of rational creatures that can perfect his own creation by an ongoing purification process of the human mind as enfolded in himself.

Thirdly, we should not see the process of creation as a simple quest. There is always the preponderance of opposing forces. One may argue that God has his own struggle against the elements, depicted in Mythology in various ways, but most aptly in the fight of Apollo against Pytho. If we may rely on the laws of thermodynamics, His struggle to create order may

inadvertently create something we might call the condition of ‘anti-order’. This is not chaos, but could be present as ‘dark matter’ that has spread through the universe to oppose order, and create the initial chaos again. His main task could well be to physically separate the ‘local universes’ thus formed.

Are we to speculate further, then the final hypothesis may well be that on the level of mind more dimensions are available. We should take countenance of the fact that the three-tiered structure of the universe implies 9 spatial dimensions and one or two dimensions of time, where the dimensions are enfolded with scale in a numinous way. As it is said that on the surface of the black hole information is collected of all the matter that falls into it, the correspondence comes to mind of the ‘*soul wrapping around the aeon*’. This is portrayed in a very tangible way in the *Dream of Gerontius* by Cardinal Newman:

*“So much I know, not knowing how I know, that the vast universe,
where I have dwelt, is quitting me, or I am quitting it.*

*Or I or it is rushing on the wings of light or lightning on an onward
course, and we e'en now are million miles apart.*

*Yet ... is this peremptory severance wrought out in lengthening
measurements of space, which grow and multiply by speed and time?*

*Or am I traversing infinity by endless subdivision, hurrying back from
finite towards infinitesimal, thus dying out of the expansive world?*

*Another marvel: someone has me fast within his ample palm; 'tis not a
grasp such as they use on earth, but all around over the surface of my
subtle being, as though I were a sphere, and capable to be accosted thus,
a uniform and gentle pressure tells me I am not self-moving, but borne
forward on my way.*

*And hark! I hear a singing; yet in sooth I cannot of that music rightly
say whether I hear or touch or taste the tones.*

Everybody should take cognisance of the fact that Dreams as pictured here may truly represent a complementary part of our real existence.

As we have earlier mentioned the Tripod's functional seat of the Pythia, we may well find in it the symbol of this knowledge of the Trinity, the three-part nature of reality. Thus, the powers given to Christ (Will, Mind and Life) just portray the mastering of this holistic view of the world.

This leads inevitable to a final corollary about the role of music. Nowhere in the world would people deny the importance of music. For most people entertainment, or a way to relax, we scholars are still baffled by the perplexing amount of music produced through the ages. That there was an explosion of it from the renaissance onwards only mirrors the growth of population. As with language, music seems an inborn asset of Man reflecting its psychological state. Sometimes even Music can forecast the turns of history, as has been observed in the lines written earlier. We could easily set the ability for music in the same frame as the ability for language. Other art forms surely should not be excluded, but it is particularly with the character of musical creations that we feel in some sense confirmation of the mathematical nature of the Mental Universe, pointing to a preponderance of the spiritual element in the acts of creation. The main asset is willpower and its use is directed to the construction of worlds of incredible diversity. Thus, even chaos may hold in itself some hidden order that only needs elaboration, as proposed in Addendum B: starting from some simple fractional numbers, n , V and E , the lowest levels of organisation may be written in '*fractal wave equations*' as a 'fundamental harmonics'. This warrants further investigation.

The final note therefore must be that the '*Strife of Mind over Matter*' as pictured throughout civilisation in Myths and Legends, is present on all levels of organisation, from the numinous strings to the arrangement of galaxies. That this leads in our world to much strife between the species, now an unequal battle on our account, and between members of our

own species, proves to be the neck breaking experience of our times. When we view the present course of history and view it in the frame of an implicate order, we may truly ask if the biblical story of the Apocalypse is pre-ordained as some sort of inevitable outcome of super-determinism.

There are those who say that the World is ‘absurd’, and those who say the world is ‘wonderful’. Of course these words are not strictly antonyms, and in some way both are true. However, the world is not ‘meaningless’. For science, only studying phenomena, it may be so; meaning does not enter the equations, but for conscious beings the universe *has* meaning. As the odds of civilisation are now seemingly in our favour, we must make a last stance, as referred to earlier: The whole of creation is in a spiritual sense incomprehensibly magnificent, and the realisation of this fact will unite us more with the implicate order (and God) than viewing it in the mere material sense.

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ADDENDUM

A. Derivation of Bohm's wave equations

Given Schrödinger's equation:

$$\frac{-\hbar^2}{2m} \nabla^2 \Psi + V\Psi = i\hbar\Psi'$$

substituting the wave function $\Psi = Re^{iS/\hbar}$ in the differential terms gives:

$$\begin{aligned}\nabla^2 \Psi &= e^{iS/\hbar} \left[\nabla^2 R + 2\frac{i}{\hbar} \nabla R \nabla S - \frac{1}{\hbar^2} R \nabla S + \frac{i}{\hbar} R (\nabla S)^2 \right] \\ \Psi' &= e^{iS/\hbar} \left[R' + \frac{i}{\hbar} R S' \right]\end{aligned}$$

Schrödinger's expression after eliminating the term $e^{iS/\hbar}$ gives:

$$\frac{-\hbar^2}{2m} \left[\nabla^2 R + 2\frac{i}{\hbar} \nabla R \nabla S - \frac{1}{\hbar^2} R \nabla S + \frac{i}{\hbar} R (\nabla S)^2 \right] + VR = i\hbar \left[R' + \frac{i}{\hbar} R S' \right]$$

after rearranging the terms in real and imaginary parts we get:

$$i\hbar R' + \frac{-i\hbar}{m} \nabla R \nabla S + \frac{-i\hbar}{2m} R (\nabla S)^2 = RS' - \frac{-\hbar^2}{2m} \nabla^2 R + \frac{1}{2m} R \nabla S + VR$$

which can only be true if:

$$i\hbar R' + \frac{-i\hbar}{m} \nabla R \nabla S + \frac{-i\hbar}{2m} R (\nabla S)^2 = 0$$

and

$$RS' - \frac{-\hbar^2}{2m} \nabla^2 R + \frac{1}{2m} R \nabla S + VR = 0$$

giving:

$$R' = \frac{1}{2m} [2\nabla R \nabla S + R (\nabla S)^2]$$

$$S' = \frac{-\hbar^2}{2m} \frac{\nabla^2 R}{R} - \frac{1}{2m} \nabla S - V$$

B. Derivation of the generalised fractal wave equation for a string

At the Planck scale ($\hbar = 1, c = 1$), counting time also as a dimension, we write in common derivatives:

$$\frac{-1}{2m} \Psi'' + V\Psi = E\Psi \quad (\text{Eq. II.A})$$

or

$$\Psi'' = 2m(V - E)\Psi$$

for stringed particles $E = nm^2$, hence:

$$\Psi'' = 2\sqrt{\frac{E}{n}}(V - E)\Psi = F\Psi$$

where F is the fraction formed by the freely chosen real numbers V, E and integer n . Integration in general terms gives:

$$\Psi' = \int F\Psi d\Psi = \frac{1}{2}F\Psi^2 + A \quad (\text{Eq. V.A})$$

and

$$\Psi = \int \left[\frac{1}{2}F\Psi^2 + A \right] d\Psi = \frac{1}{6}F\Psi^3 + A\Psi + B \quad (\text{Eq. V.B})$$

Considering that Ψ can be represented by the complex number $U + iW$ - or if convenient in the polar space Re^{iS} - the solution of the wave equation would involve mapping all points (U, W) - or (R, S) - in the complex plane, for which these equations are true, which would effectively comprise a fractal landscape, particularly the derivative form (Eq. V.A). The main proposal is that the effective form of the equation can be different in reality, but that it would still give a fractal outcome.

Postludium

The speculative events depicted in these writings have now passed by 60 years ago. Many times after that singular day when we made our way from the Ayr dockyard to Glasgow I have been somewhat taunted by the thought that all these notable persons that accompanied us had a secret they didn't feel like sharing with us, the younger generation. This notion was confirmed by the completion of this narrative.

The warm feelings of our family gatherings on the many sea voyages, however, remained with me, and it gradually replaced this suspicion. We visited Aunt Monica many times in the West Indies and Aunt Maria on Madeira. The sea was not always tolerant to our stomachs, but we persevered and managed. The bonus in the end was always that we learned a lot about nature and music in the same way as Pierce's aunts had earlier provided for him.

It gives me solace to hold in my hand, so once in a while, this strange and precious souvenir of my grandfather, which he (arguably) received in that secret realm he had visited: a large golden coin with on one side the *Setting Sun* and on the other side the *Half Moon* and other *Heavenly Orbs*. He gave it to me on my 20th birthday with the words: “*Keep it well, keep it safe!*” When my grandfather had deceased many years later, I asked my grandmother Sheila what he actually meant with this strange reference to Gandalf the Grey, and not yet knowing anything about the events pictured in this account, she said: “*Well, John, the only thing I can firmly say is that your grandfather and his pall Pierce, loving and lovable persons as they were indeed, were also incorrigible rascals!*”